

The Situation
PAIN, DANGERS, DUTIES, CONSOLATIONS
OF CATHOLICS
IN CURRENT TIMES.

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THE SITUATION

LETTERS TO M. J. DE F**, AT THE CHATEAU DE B**.

PAIN.

LETTER I

Dear friend,

You remind me of my work 'WHERE ARE WE GOING?' That work, published sixteen years ago, is in your eyes the anticipation of what we now see, and you ask me to say in 1860, what I think about the situation of Europe, from what I have said in 1844. I leave to your friendship the responsibility of its judgment. As for the desire to know where we are, apart from what is personal to me, who could blame you? It is only too justified by the seriousness of the circumstances.

At certain times of the day, the sun shines brightly. The man can then go about his business and walk without fear of losing his way. But there comes a time when the sun goes below the horizon. Without disappearing entirely, the objects darken and fade. Soon night falls, and no one can work or walk without danger.¹

This alternation of light and darkness takes place in the day we call life: the life of nations as well as individuals. When the sun of faith shines on them, societies walk without fear of going astray. But there come times when error, avoided for a long time, ends up piling up clouds which obscure the horizon. The truth no longer projects, on most minds, only dubious glimmers. The danger of going astray becomes immense.

¹ Walk while you have light, so that darkness does not overtake you. John XII 35. ~
The night comes when no one can work. Id. IX, 4

At these dreadful hours a kind of dizziness seems to fall on the world. Heads turn. Words change their meaning. The strongest minds no longer reason, the others are completely unreasonable. In the incessant conflict of contradictory opinions, convictions waver. The uncertainty of truth generates the uncertainty of law. From there, a host of erroneous judgments and, too often, eternally regrettable actions.

If we are not there, that is where we are going. Night is falling in Europe. I will only give you one proof. A trial, without example or name in history, is brought against the papacy. For ten months, nations, daughters of the Church, have publicly pleaded against their mother. They accuse her of many things and demand that she be stripped. For or against, all of Europe took part in the debates. The cause appears to be understood. At this moment, the sentence is being handed down with cannon fire. Prisoner, fugitive or martyr, the Father of Christians will henceforth eat the bread of alms and will not know where to rest his head. Some say: well judged. The others: it's a *fait accompli*. Some: it is parricide.

In the presence of these opposing judgments, the right of the Catholic is to ask the priest for the light necessary to illuminate the present and to guide the future: *Sentinel, what about the night?* The duty of the priest is to respond. To accomplish it, as much as it is in me, I am sending you these few pages. They will have achieved their goal, if they contribute in unison to that of the Church, their mother.

First of all, you have to define the situation. What is it, and what are its distinctive characteristics? Freed from the thousand sophisms by which we seek to obscure or distort it; apart from the political accessories, which are only the twists and turns of the drama, the situation was summed up yesterday in three words: "*Reduce the patrimony of Saint-Pierre; make the Pope the resident of Europe; leave him only a shaky throne and a paltry scepter.*"

Today, the Revolution, having become more bold, formulates its project thus: "An Italian empire, with Rome as its capital."²

This is the goal. In vain they used all means to deceive Catholics and Europe. What the Revolution wants today, what it wanted yesterday, what it has always wanted, is neither Milan, nor Florence, nor Palermo, nor Naples, nor Venice: it is Rome. If she takes Tuscany and Lombardy, Sicily and the Romagna, it is to take Rome. This, I repeat, is what the Revolution wants from an immutable will. I add: this is what she must have wanted. Before saying the reason, it is necessary to clearly characterize its current war against the metropolis of Catholicism.

However, this war presents characteristics which essentially distinguish it from all others, and which increase its seriousness. In past centuries, we have seen several times when popes were forced to leave Rome and flee into exile. The expeller had a proper name. He was called in turn Henri, Otho, Barbarossa. We knew who to blame. Today, the Pope's expeller has no proper name: he is called LEGION.

Garibaldi, Fanti, Mazzini, Victor-Emmanuel and the others are only his soldiers. Legion is nowhere and he is everywhere. He lives in the air. He speaks all the languages. All the echoes of the world respond to his voice. It is he who puts the papacy on trial; who cites her at the bar of the whole world; who discusses his rights; which transforms what was dogma into a problem, and which makes millions of voices cry out: The Pope is wrong. Legion is the ***Spirit*** which breathes on the world today and which arms it against the Holy See.

In the past, the expulsion of Vicar of Jesus Christ was an act of brutality and temporary violence. Public opinion protested energetically and soon forced the kidnapper to let go of his prey. Today, the same act is a calculated act of cold

² The time for half-words has passed. Mr. de Cavour has just said in full parliament: "We want the Eternal City to become the capital of Italy. Under what conditions, when and how? We will be able to say it in six months." The outcome explains the comedy.

blood; an act which is part of a general plan and which one claims to pass off as legitimate. We are not expelling the Holy Father, we are proving to him that he must withdraw. On the value of the reasons, opinion is divided: the papacy falls to the applause of half of Europe.

In the past, the spoliation of the heritage of Saint-Pierre did not take away from the Church all of its territorial independence. Landowner in all countries, it continued to be a power to be reckoned with. Today, by confiscating the Roman States, we are taking away from the mother of Christian nations the last independent corner of land that remains.

Formerly, the papacy was for baptized Europe what the holy ark was for the people of Israel. To touch her was not only to hurt her heart, it was to attack God himself in the apple of his eye. Today, the most monstrous attacks against the Holy See leave nations indifferent. The land of the brave has barely provided a few thousand crusaders to defend the most sacred and glorious of causes!

Where does this change of disposition in the public mind come from? How can we explain the frightening ease with which the Revolution advances towards its goal? What is the meaning of the iniquitous enterprise, the last act of which will probably be completed before the publication of these letters?

Every government relies on two forces: moral force and material force. For a weak state, essentially peaceful and surrounded by powerful states, the first is everything. At home and away from home, general affection, respect, popularity, in a word, must surround him and take the place of armies and citadels. Despite inevitable tribulations, this is how he lived for ten centuries, peaceful and venerated, the royalty of Saint-Peter, in the middle of warlike Europe. Does this powerful popularity, born of the love and faith of the people, protect the blessed royalty of Pius IX today?

Today's Europe is three-quarters heretical, schismatic, rationalist and indifferent: that's a fact.

For a long time modern nations, even Catholic ones, have tended to become secularized, which means freeing themselves as much as they can from religious authority: this is still a fact. "Societies, it is said, are secular. They must be. Such is the spirit of the times, the sign of virility, the condition of progress."

From these two facts results a third: Current Europe no longer includes a Priest-King. She pities her subjects, as one pities the pariahs of India. But it understands and supports very well, like all heretical and schismatic countries, a King-Pontiff. In his eyes, the papal royalty is an outdated debris from the Middle Ages; a shameful legacy of the times of ignorance; a remnant of theocracy incompatible with civilization and an obstacle to the emancipation of the human spirit.

Hence, as an inevitable consequence, the division of opinion on the Roman question. Hence the thousands of sarcasms, spread everywhere, against the Pope's government, against the Pope's political conduct, against the Pope's subjects, against the Pope's soldiers. It is therefore a sad fact that the temporary government of the Vicar of Jesus Christ no longer has as its defense the powerful popularity of the past. There lies the double cause of its instability and the triumphs of the Revolution.

This situation is the storm of Europe which is all the more culpable for it. It will seem much more so to you, if you examine the goal of the division which it pursues with so much obstinacy, or which it allows to be accomplished with so much weakness.

Isolate the Church; gradually push her out of society; weaken its action on the world; bring it back to the state of purely spiritual power, as in the days of the Catacombs; make her dependent on Caesar, (ie, the state; government); hamper her movements and make her enter the most difficult phase of her existence: For those who know how to read, this is the first idea, written in the supreme fact that we think of consuming.

To constitute temporal power, absolute master of the earth through property, of intelligence through doctrine, and of the will through law; thus annihilating the great social fact of Christianity, the hierarchical division of powers: This is the second idea, already realized by all heterodox governments.

In other words, the current fact means: SUBSTITUTION OF THE ABSOLUTE REIGN OF MAN FOR THE REIGN OF GOD.

These are the external characteristics of the situation. In my first letter I will try to tell you the mysterious reason.

All yours, etc.

LETTER II

Dear Friend,

I promised to tell you the reason why the Revolution must want Rome at all costs. The last sentence of my letter has already made you sense this. I will explain myself more clearly.

It would be childish to dispute this: the Church's temporal power is only being attacked in order to gain access to its spiritual power. They rightly flatter themselves that the progressive weakening of the latter will benefit what is called the emancipation of humanity, or, to put it another way, the autocracy of kings and peoples.

Here, facts speak louder than words. Is it to obtain the few leagues of territory of which the Papal State is made up that the Revolution sets in motion all its public and secret forces? Because the successor of the fisherman of Galilee will have an independent corner of land, to moor his boat and rest his head whitened by the years, is the European balance threatened?

How do the Italians themselves not see that they are being fooled, and that their unification project is a utopia? Wanting to unify Italy without the Church is to undertake the solution of an insoluble problem. There are only two things that unite: God in heaven and the Church on earth. To pretend to unite without these two elements of unity is simply to want to achieve the absurd. Instead of unification, the Italians, peoples of different origins and antipathetic races, will achieve division and anarchy, followed by the ruin of their country or brutal despotism. It will be, as in the good old days, unity in slavery and in misery.

Motivating the war against Rome on the freedom and happiness to be procured for papal subjects is a bitter joke. The conduct of those who allow it is the solemn denial of their words.

Why then this persistence in wanting to strip the Pope of his temporality? What unknown force pushes the world not to shy away from any maneuver,

however shameful and guilty it may be, to achieve this goal? Whoever wants to give a serious explanation of this otherwise inexplicable phenomenon must resort to the great mystery of history.

The world is divided into two enemy cities: the City of Good and the City of Evil. Formed from the beginning of the centuries, the city of Satan will develop throughout the duration of ancient paganism. Its center is at Nineveh and Babylon. Queen of the world, Rome finally becomes its capital.³

From there, as from the top of his citadel, the *Prince of the century, leader of this century*, reigns as Sovereign. From there, orders come that make people tremble to the ends of the earth; the armies that ravage them; the proconsuls who despoil and oppress them; the scandals that degrade them; the edicts of proscription which, for three centuries, watered the cities and countryside of the East and the West with Christian blood. Silent with terror before this gigantic power, humanity only knows how to give it its adoration, its gold and its blood.

However, the destinies of the Eternal City are not fulfilled. Depth of God's guidance on this mysterious city! Rome had to become the capital of another empire, no less powerful and more extensive than the first. Another God will have to reign in the Capitol; other armies subdue the people to him; other proconsuls govern his provinces; other laws direct the human race, in whatever climate it inhabits. For a long time the world, enlightened by this new Rome by the sun of truth, by it freed from the irons of slavery, will pay it with enthusiasm a just tribute of recognition and fidelity.

Despite this beneficial revolution, the memory of pagan Rome, of its great material unity, of its lying freedoms and its deceptive splendors, will no more perish in the heart of man than the original virus. Satan will entertain, from generation to generation, the thought of resurrecting his empire. In the eyes of the sons of Eve; he will dazzle the ancient glories of his reign. Through insolent comparisons, he will dare to compare his creations to the creations of

³ S. Aug. From Civ. Dei, lib. XV, c.v.

Christianity, and, too often, will know how to give preference to the former over the latter.

Its institutions, its arts, its wealth, its so-called great men, its splendid triumphs and above all the fascinating apotheosis of the human will, will become for many a double object of admiration and regret. Under one name or another, resurrect this order of things, and, if possible, make Rome the capital of a new anti-Christian empire of which Italy, restored to political unity, will be, as in the past, the proud municipality: Such is, whether we see it or not, the formidable idea hidden at the bottom of what moves before our eyes.

There is ample evidence of this diabolical tendency, which has long been noted by a few, and has now become palpable: two will be enough. On June 28 of this year, the Cardinal Vicar said in his edict on the occasion of the feast of the Prince of the Apostles: "The triumph of Saint Peter over the city of Rome excited such rage in the demon, that he has never ceased to attack the Holy See with the fiercest war, nor to want to bring Rome back to ancient errors and barbarities. Without recalling its efforts in past centuries, have we not been, ourselves. and are we not now witnesses of those whom he is leading against Peter's boat?"

In his Encyclical of December 8, 1849, Pius IX, victim for the first time of the Revolution, is even more explicit. "The Revolution," he said, "is inspired by Satan himself. Its goal is to destroy from top to bottom the edifice of Christianity and to reconstitute on its ruins the social order of paganism. Its great means is to make shine in the eyes of the Italians the glories of pagan Rome, in order to make Christian Rome odious, as being the obstacle which prevents Italy from reconquering the ancient splendor of ancient times, that is to say of pagan times: (*quo Italia pristinum veterum temporum, id est Ethnicorum, splendorem iterum acquirere possit.*)"

Thus says the greatest authority on earth. This language of the august Pontiff is too remarkable for me to simply report it. I will come back to this in my next letter. Today I limit myself to making a few conclusions.

Bringing the world back to paganism is the last word of the Revolution. In revealing it, the oracle of truth (Pius IX) spoke gold. The great obstacle to the execution of this infernal project, *diabolici eorum consilii* (their diabolical plans), is in the eyes of the Revolution, the temporal power of the Holy See. She's not wrong.

The Pope-King is the visible kingship of Jesus Christ over the world, it is the independence of the Church and of the truth. The Church being today everywhere stripped of the sovereign right of property, this visible royalty disappears with the loss of the Roman State. Unable to go any further, this is what the Revolution wants. This is why the domain of Saint Peter is so eagerly coveted; why Rome once again becomes the issue of combat; why, finally, we see what the world has never seen: the Vicar of Jesus Christ threatened in his very capital, by a hundred thousand excommunicated people, to the great applause of all the citizens of the City of Evil, spread all over the world.

Rome taken, Satan once again becomes the prince of this world. For what? because the last social obstacle to his power and the authority of his lieutenants has disappeared. Create, as before, a world where Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, will be as if he were not; a world where human power, without control, will have the Church and all spiritual interests under its control; this is its goal. With the Pope-King, this goal is unachievable. You will understand it.

Representative of God himself among men, the Pope is the depositary and incorruptible interpreter of the eternal law of justice and freedom; the bronze wall impassable to all despotisms; the immutable pontiff who alone can say with sovereign authority to oppressive kings, as well as to rebellious peoples: *NON LICET*, this is not permitted; who, at the risk of his life, is obliged to say it, and who has said it faithfully from generation to generation, for eighteen centuries.

Now, the Pope-King is the materially independent Pope: he is the inviolable Pope. The inviolable Pope is the Pope free to tell the whole truth and to hurl anathema against the despoilers and despots, whatever their height.

The Revolution, which, under the mask of freedom and equality, is nothing but spoliation and living despotism, cannot support papal royalty. Her existence is for her a question of life and death. She feels wonderfully that there is a force there, the only one which opposes another force whose triumph she enjoys today and the apotheosis tomorrow. It therefore directs all its attacks against this force of the Pontiff-King, because it alone prevents, as it will always prevent, the modern Caesars from engraving on their diadem the stupefying motto of their predecessors of old; Emperor and sovereign Pontiff, (Imperator and summus Pontifex).

Let the so-called worshipers of freedom take it for granted. Their attacks against the papal royalty lead them, and us with them, to the most threatening despotism that has yet weighed on the world. When the Pope is no longer king, kings will be popes. All the freedom reserved for the peoples, who will have crucified it, in the person of its representative, will be to repeat, under the mortal embraces of slavery, the funeral words of the gladiators: "Caesar, those who are about to die salute you: *Cæsar, morituri te salutant.*"

If we want to fully understand the situation, this, my dear friend, is what we need to see: the rest, as you say, is for the short-sighted.

All yours.

LETTER III

Dear Friend,

As I announced to you, I return to the remarkable and little-noticed words of Pius IX. Recorded in a solemn act, these words are not said at random. We will see that they have a precise meaning, and much deeper than it appears at first glance. They are a line of light thrown into the depths of the mystery of iniquity, which we call the Roman Question. By pronouncing them, the Holy Father tore off the last mask of the Revolution. From now on, no one is allowed to misunderstand the intimate nature and the final goal of the movement which is sweeping the world.

Therefore, Pius IX and his vicar warn Catholics that Satan continues today, with frightening success, the efforts that he has not stopped making, for eighteen centuries, to enter Rome and make it the capital of the City of Man; that the goal of the Revolution is to substitute pagan Rome for Christian Rome and return the world to paganism.

But what ! Is this possible and who has ever heard of such a thing? Our century, so completely foreign to everything it should know, will not fail to treat the words of the Holy Father as an exaggeration and a figure of speech. You yourself, dear friend, will perhaps be surprised to learn that in delivering to Europe the program of the Revolution, the Vicar of Jesus Christ is the echo of the entire tradition. The most illustrious Fathers of the Church, the most renowned theologians, the most authoritative interpreters of Scripture, expressed pontifical thought. Furthermore, they agree that Satan will succeed in his plan; so that the Church will end, as it began, with a gigantic struggle of which Rome, once again pagan, will be the center and focus.

Whether that day approaches is not the question. What I mean is that the current attempt is a step forward towards this goal, and even the most marked that we know. In this respect, it is one of the most serious events that can

occupy the human mind. I look forward to hearing your opinion. The limits of a letter do not allow us to bring you the testimonies of a tradition as old as Christianity⁴, please content yourself with a faithful analysis.

"According to the teaching of the apostles, says the voice of the centuries, a day will come when Satan, full of rage against Jesus Christ and the Christians, will regain the ground he has lost, will strengthen his reign and extend it, then he will attack Rome, because it is his rival and the residence of the Pontiffs. He will make himself master of it, will chase away the Vicar of Jesus Christ, will persecute the true faithful and will slaughter the religious and the priests.⁵

"Pagan under Nero and the other emperors until Constantine, Rome was Babylon, the capital of the City of Evil.⁶ Under Constantine, having become Christian and pious, it ceased to be Babylon and began to be the capital of the City of Good, holy and faithful city, Zion beloved of God, pillar of faith, mother of piety, mistress of holiness she will abandon faith, piety, Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Pontiff, she. Babylon, the capital of the City of Evil, will once again become pagan.⁷

"God will allow it so that we distinguish the city from the church, Rome from the chair of Peter, and so that the Romans learn that it is neither to their merits, nor to the majesty of their city, that they are indebted of the signal honor of possessing the Holy See and the metropolis of the Catholic world.

⁴ You will find them in Suarez, *De Antichristo*, lib. V, c. VIII, IX ; in Bosio, *De Signis Ecclesiae*, lib. XXIV, c. vi ; in Cornelius à Lapide, in c. XVII and XVIII *Apocalypse*; in Bellarmine, *De Sum, Pontif.* lib. III, c. XIII ; in Malvenda, *de Antichrist.* lib. IV, c.v ; in Baron, *Annal.* year 58, etc., etc.

⁵ We have said that it is certain and established by the common tradition of the Fathers, which also seemed to us to be apostolic. Suarez, *De Antichristo.* book V, c. 9, n. 14. -- He will hate Rome and will fight with her and will desolate her and set her on fire. Bellarmine. I am about Pope book 3, c. III.

⁶ The true Babylon was the first Rome, and the true Rome was the second Babylon. St. Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, lib. 18, c. II.

⁷ Abandoning faith, piety, Christ, the Pontiff, will again become Babylon. Cornelius à Lapide. *in c. XVII Apocalypse.*

"Rome's dismal destiny is in no way contrary to the promises made to the Church and the Apostolic See. Both will always persevere in the faith and in the possession of the Chair of Peter. Placed in one place or another, this chair will not perish any more than the faith that flows from it. It will always be the same. For all its days, the Church will remain visible, even if it is forced to flee to the mountains and hide for the most part in caves and deserts.⁸

" Far from harming the Church, this revolution will increase its glory. Never was Christian Rome more glorious than when pagan Rome, thirsty for blood, persecuted it with the most rage. Never did it show more constancy and heroic virtues. It will be the same when Rome has become pagan again. The glory of the Vicar of Jesus Christ and of the true faithful who remain in his bosom will shine with a much more vivid brilliance than if Rome had always remained Christian and pious. "

All this, my dear friend, supposes a fact which no one thought of two years ago, namely that Rome will once again become the capital of a powerful empire, essentially hostile to the Church; that it will reconquer its ancient pagan splendor, and, with its corrupt morals, will resume its despotic appearance. Well! all these strange things, tradition has known them.

"Rome will return to its pagan splendor and idolatry.⁹ Pagan, it will strip the Sovereign Pontiff of its temporality and expel him. Clothed with its ancient

⁸ It is not contrary to the promises made by the Church and the Apostolic See concerning perseverance in faith and in the Chair of Peter, that Rome should be destroyed in that way, because The Chair will never fail, nor will its faith, whether in this or in that place; for everywhere it will be the same, and the visible Church will always endure, the Church will always remain visible, even if she has to flee to the mountains and hide largely in caves and deserts.. *Suarez, id. c. VII.*

⁹ The Roman city would then be restored to its former glory as well as its idolatry. Cornelius à Lapide *ibid.*

power, it will use it to persecute the Saints with more fury, and immolate the martyrs with more cruelty than the first Caesars."¹⁰

By a coincidence that I cannot help but point out to you, Pius IX uses to characterize the current promises of the Revolution, the same terms which the ancient doctors used to mark their accomplishment. They said, centuries ago: "Rome will return to its ancient splendor, to its riches, to its power, to its glory, queen and mistress of the world."¹¹

Pius IX says today: "To alienate the minds of Italians from the Catholic religion, the enemies of the Church do not blush to affirm and shout everywhere that the Roman Church is the obstacle which opposes to the glory of Italy, to its greatness, to its prosperity, and prevents it from once again acquiring the ancient splendor of ancient times, that is to say, of pagan times."¹²

Tradition adds: "Intoxicated with her new glory, Rome will say: I have cast out my husband and I am not a widow, I am full of people. My king is gone, I am only more queen. Everyone obeys me and I obey no one, *sedeo regina*."

In truth, my dear friend, does this language, several centuries old, not seem strange to you? Isn't that the one we hear every day? Don't the so-called emancipators of Rome and Italy constantly say that Rome is a slave; that the Pope expelled, the Eternal City will once again become free and queen as before? Do they not say to her: Rejoice in the glorious destinies that we promise you. We are your soldiers today, because we want to be your sons and

¹⁰ Returning to paganism, he will persecute, drive out, or kill Christ and Christians, and especially the Pope. Id. -- He will persecute the saints more bitterly and afflict them with crueler martyrdoms than they suffered under ethnic emperors. Malvenda *where above*

¹¹ Rome will return to its former splendour, wealth, strength, and pomp: as once she was the queen of the world and the mistress of the world.

¹² Enemies of the Church . . they are not ashamed to assert that the minds of the Italians are being alienated from the Catholic faith, and they are not ashamed to cry out in every direction, that the Catholic religion is an opponent of the glory, greatness, and prosperity of the Italian nation. . . so that Italy may once again acquire the former splendor of the ancient times, that is, of the ethnics.

your citizens tomorrow. If we fight, it is to restore to you your ancient majesty, your ancient Capitol, your ancient triumphs. *C'est pour faire de toi la splendide capitale d'un grand empire.* (It is to make you the splendid capital of a great empire).¹³

The city of the popes, once again the city of the Caesars, such is the supreme destiny of Rome and the last triumph of Satan. How will this apostasy, a thousand times incredible, be accomplished if it was not announced a thousand times? With superhuman clarity, tradition saw the path that would lead Rome to this fatal end.

"The transformation of Christian Rome into pagan Rome will not happen all at once. The Romans of later times were passionate about marbles and porphyries. They will make their glory consist of splendid buildings, in temples of idols, in statues of gold and silver, in precious stones, representing Venus, Cupid and the other abominable divinities of ancient paganism. They will love the games, the shows, all the things by which the ancient Romans corrupted the people and lured them to the worship of false gods.

"They will get used to looking with pride at the crimes of their ancestors. They will make them the subject of their praise. Their ambition will be to reproduce the actions of Caesar, of Pompey, of Trajan. They will want to rival them, to resurrect their glory thus that all the vain grandeur of ancient Rome. They will invoke the sonorous names of the Catos; they will speak of grandeur, of power, of Roman freedoms, on which we already see many reveling in."¹⁴

The Romans thus prepared for a long time, what will happen? Here it is, always according to the fathers and doctors: "Atheists of Satan will pervert the upper classes among the Romans. They will make the ancient glory of their ancestors shine before their eyes; they will excite them to reconquer it and to restore the cult of the Gods, to whom the empire owed its splendor. They will

¹³ Word from Cavour to parliament, October 11.

¹⁴ Etiamnum aliquos priscis hisce Romanorum fumis pasci et gloriari videmus.

attract them to voluptuousness and independence, in order to lead them to atheism, as has been seen many times in other countries. To cite just one example: a city no less holy, no less providential than Rome, Jerusalem was pagan under the Canaanites, faithful under the Jews, Christian under the Apostles, pagan again under the Romans, Mohammedan under the Saracens.

“As punishment for its apostasy, Rome will perish. God will allow this great ruin to avenge the blood of the old and new martyrs from whom Rome will have drunk. The Romans will therefore be punished more severely than the others, because they will have sinned more seriously. Descendants of the former persecutors or inhabitants of the same city, they will become united with the iniquities of their ancestors, wanting to imitate them and restore to Rome the glory, the splendor and the power which it enjoyed under paganism.”¹⁵

The men who use this language are the greatest names in Christian history. Their names are Tertullian, Lactantius, Cyril, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Victorinus, Ecumenius, Cassiodorus, Sixtus of Siena, Baronius, Bellarmine, Suarez, Cornelius Lapide, Bosio, and twenty others, *et alios viginte*. Devoted to Rome and the Church, no interest other than that of truth has led them to predict humiliations and calamities which they deplore while announcing them. Their works, received with respect as the source of true doctrine, are the torches that the past has handed over to the hands of the present to illuminate the future. What's left? if not to bow before this imposing testimony. Very weak would be the reason which would not go that far.

All yours,

¹⁵ Quocirca Deus in iis majorum peccata puniet ; quia illis, propter approvationem et imitationem, majorum peccata imputabuntur. . . eo quod illis placebunt scelera majorum, eaque æmulari volent, ut Romæ pristinum sub gentilismo splendorem et imperium restituant.

LETTER IV

As far as I could, I have just, dear friend, characterized the situation. You know the nature of the movement which carries us, and, unless I am mistaken, the precise point at which the eternal struggle of evil against good stands. **It is summed up today in the spoliation of the Papal States, or, which is all one and the same, in the suppression of the visible kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Did this fact spring up like a mushroom under an oak tree? Did the idea fall into the head of any character yesterday? Is it all of a sudden, and so to speak in a single leap, that Europe finds itself engaged in the formidable impasse, from which it does not know how to escape?

To think so would be a mistake. The all too famous brochure: *The Pope and the Congress*, did not create the situation: it reveals it. Everything that is, emanates from what was. To see the current situation as only a transitory, unforeseen or improvised event would be to reduce the giant to the size of a dwarf. The complete spoliation of the Roman Church is, as we have said, a fact long announced. It has deep roots in modern Europe's past. We will search for them. To understand a disease well and, above all, to treat it successfully, you must know its origin.

Considered in its primary cause, which is the rage of Satan, the supreme spoliation with which we are threatened is as old as Christianity. If we study it in its formula and in its pretexts, in a word in its public and avowed manifestation, **it is only four centuries old.**

As you know, upon entering the world, Christianity found the human race bowed under the yoke of Caesar. All power was concentrated in the hand of one man, all right in his will. This man was god: and this god was called Nero, Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian. **It was unity in abjection.**

To break this charter of the most monstrous despotism, Christianity divided power.

Alongside Caesar, it created the pontiff. To **Caesar, subordinate to the pontiff**, it entrusts bodies; to the pontiff, it gives souls. Like soul and body, spiritual society and civil society, united without merging, march steadily towards their relative perfection. With Caesarian despotism no longer possible, human freedom is saved. Three centuries of fierce struggle drove the devil from Rome, its capital, which became the capital of the City of God.

As the eminent Cardinal Vicar said, furious Satan did not consider himself defeated. Since his expulsion, he has not stopped prowling around Rome and making incessant efforts to return there. History, which tells them, also tells of its eternal defeat. In vain, to resurrect the past, he sometimes enlisted under his seditious standards the emperors of Germany and their lawyers. In vain the poet of Florence publicizes the apology of ancient Caesarism: Dante fails like the Ghibellines. The European order rested for a long time on the evangelical principle, like the pyramid of the desert on its granite base.

These old attempts against the papal royalty will be, if you like, the root causes of the current situation; but the real root is more modern. This root, without which the tree would never have grown, was planted four centuries ago in the soil of Europe. At this time, of sinister memory, a kind of fanaticism for the political institutions of pagan peoples awoke among the Christian nations of the West. Presented as the type of strength and social perfection, the great material unity of Tiberius' world shimmers before an astonished Europe. Ancient Rome emerges from the tomb with all its procession of freedoms, virtues and victories. We sing of its greatness; we repeat the secret of his power. It is rebuilt in theory, and still at the top of the building shines **Caesar, emperor and pontiff**.

Then accomplished a radical change in the traditional politics of Europe. Machiavelli was its main instrument. "**His work**," says an unsuspected author, Mr. Matter, "**marks a new era; an era of complete subversion**"; not a simple

break between religion and politics; but an era of fundamental subversion of their old relationships."¹⁶

What no one else had done before him, this man, son of his education, clearly formulated the theory of Caesarian omnipotence, abolished by Christianity. He spoke it, he wrote it, he made it popular.

There is, and always will be, one obstacle to this omnipotence: **the property that makes the Church independent**. Machiavelli is careful to point this out. Throughout Europe, crowned ambition will, sooner or later, make it disappear. In the meantime, the Florentine (Machiavelli) put his hand to work in his own country.

Twenty years before Luther, in a Catholic town a few leagues from Rome, he dared to publish that the only obstacle to Italian unity and the cause of all its ills was the temporal power of the Roman Church. One is stunned to find under his pen all the politics of Piedmont, about the Roman Question, Garibaldi's proclamations, Mazzini's program, M. de Cavour's harangues, Victor Emmanuel's memorandum and the instructions of the secret sociétés.¹⁷

You be the judge. "We Italians," says Machiavelli, "have a great obligation to the Roman Church: it is to be the cause of our political ruin. I mean that it is she who has held and still holds our country divided. Union and happiness have never reigned in a country unless it has formed a single republic under a single prince. Now, the cause that prevents Italy from having either a republic or a single prince governing it, is solely the Church of Rome.

"On the one hand, her temporal power is too weak to take over the whole of Italy and become its queen; on the other hand, her temporal domain is not so important that the fear of losing it did not drive the Church to have it defended by powerful princes, against those in Italy who could be a threat to her. In this

¹⁶ *Hist. des Sc. polit.*, etc., t. I, 70.

¹⁷ On March 4 of that year, Ricasoli, governor of Tuscany, told the troops: "Our constitution can only be hindered by its *eternal decrepit enemy*. **This enemy is the temporal power of Rome.**"

way, the Roman Church prevented us from living under a single leader. Condemned to bear the yoke of many, Italy has fallen into such a state of disunity and weakness, that it is a prey offered not only to powerful Barbarians, but also to anyone who wants to take it over. This is what we Italians owe to the Church of Rome and not to others.” (*Disc.*, liv. I, c. XII.)

To facilitate the suppression of the temporal domain of the Holy See, Machiavelli removes all scruples from those who would like to undertake it: he assures them that religion itself is interested in it. Here, my dear friend, the surprise increases. All the accusations reproduced today for the same purpose and accepted by the majority, Machiavelli's works contain them. “It shows that Italy fell into ruins for having lacked religion, and THAT through the fault of the Roman Church;” such is the title of one of its chapters. (*ibid*) Here is the end: "We owe it to the Church of Rome, we Italians, to be impious and scoundrels."

By this sample, judge the piece. There is no need to say it: at the end of these sophisms and these slanders is, what we see with our eyes, the expropriation of the domain of Saint-Peter *for reasons of Italian utility*.

After explaining his motives, Machiavelli moves on to practice. Everything written in the last two years by the unifiers of Italy and the despoilers of the Holy See is copied word for word in the master's book. Flattering the hereditary vanity of his compatriots, Machiavelli shows them the seductive image of the ancient empire. Italians," he cries, "do you want Italian unity under an Italian prince? Do you want a return to the days of strength, glory and happiness enjoyed by your *ancestors under the great Roman unity*? The first thing to do is to drive the *barbarians* out of Italy.¹⁸ She is waiting, almost dying, for the one who will heal her wounds, put an end to the oppression of *Lombardy*, put an

¹⁸ C'est le nom piémontais des Autrichiens. (This is the Piedmontese name of the Austrians.)

end to the vexations that plague *Naples* and *Tuscany*, and finally heal wounds so inveterate that they have become fistulous."¹⁹

In order to restore the ancient empire to its former splendor, and to achieve the Italian unity and freedom that would be its happy consequences, a Caesar was needed. Machiavelli never forgot this. To the prince, ambitious for this glory, he outlines the rules he must follow and the qualities he must possess. Above all, the liberating prince must regard religion as a mere instrument of his reign. "His duty," says the master, "is to favor what presents itself to the advantage of religion. If he is certain that it is a lie, he must give it credence, in order to keep the people in fear and submission. The more skillful he is, the more careful he will be. Such was the conduct of the Romans, the true models of good politics."²⁰

To this sacrilegious juggling act, Tiberius' successor added perfidy towards men. As a well-advised prince," Machiavelli continues, "he must not fulfill his promise, when such fulfillment would be harmful to him, and when the reasons which determined him to promise no longer exist. It will always be easy for him to find pretexts to color his failure to keep his word. He will have to understand that it is not possible for a prince, especially a new prince, to observe everything that makes honest people honest. So, as far as he can, he must not stray from the path of good; but if need be, he must know how to enter the path of evil. Moreover, **what we consider is the result**. If he succeeds, all the means he has employed will be judged honorable and praised by everyone."²¹

Machiavelli concludes from these maxims and others of the same kind, expounded with the same crudity, that his hero must be both lion and fox, in accordance with the model left by the ancients, our masters in politics. The prince," he says, "who must act like a beast, will try to be both fox and lion. The

¹⁹ *Il Principe*, c. ult, ediz., 1550. -- *Ibid.*, c. XXVI.

²⁰ *Disc.*, c. XIV, XVI, etc.

²¹ *Il Principe*, c. XVIII.

more he knows how to be a fox, the more successful he will be. But it's important to hide this beast well, and consequently to be a great dissimulator and a great liar. " ²²

You see it, my dear friend; considered in its formula and in its pretexts, the situation is not new. If, despite more or less numerous precursors, we rightly attribute Arianism to Arius, Pelagianism to Pelagius, because they clearly gave the formula for these heresies and were their apostles: history is therefore well founded to point out Machiavelli as the father of Piedmontese or Mazzinian politics, since he was the first to trace the program and prepare for the triumph.

If the theory of the spoliation of the Roman Church goes back four centuries, the partial realization of this sovereignly anti-Christian principle is barely a few years later. In Machiavelli's time, the Church was the largest landowner in Europe. No property was more sacred than his. Everything changed with the Caesarian policy, restored by Machiavelli and his immense school. Developed by Lutheranism, applied by all governments, the spoliation of the Church is making the rounds of Europe. In the ancient sense all kings want to be Caesars, all princes want to be kings.

All the protective barriers of ecclesiastical property rights came tumbling down in the face of their ambition, aroused and justified by the Florentine. The dispossession of the bride of Jesus Christ, or, as it has been called for the past two years, annexation, invaded Prussia, Sweden, Denmark and Holland. It passed into England; and there, as in all other countries, it was consummated by the shedding of torrents of Catholic blood.

Aided by lawyers, and it must be said, by certain members of the clergy, pagan Caesarism penetrates more and more into the politics of governments. The spoliation extends to Catholic States. Joseph II spent his life stealing from the Church. France follows in the footsteps of other nations and distances them. Portugal, Spain, even Italy have imitated it. It is therefore true that what is

²² But this nature must know how to color well, and be a great simulator and dissimulator, *Ibid*

being done today against Rome is only the complement of a sacrilegious attack, begun almost four centuries ago, and carried out throughout Europe. This is the giant we have to fight against.

This is also, my dear friend, the current situation from the three points of view of origin, theory and practice. Tomorrow, I will return with you to the intimate cause of this strange phenomenon.

All yours.

LETTER V

The abolition of the temporal kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ by the dethronement of the Pope as sovereign prince - this, my friend, is the parricidal goal towards which the so-called Christian nations have been striving for centuries. Today, less than ever, it's impossible not to see it. As I said, this most odious and threatening event in history is the situation. Everything we see, ***and everything we don't, revolves around this supreme attack.***

Let us, Catholics, be careful not to be fooled. The emancipation of peoples is a pretext; the unification of Italy a means; Piedmont a mask; Victor-Emmanuel a laborer. The duplicities of diplomacy, the treaties made or broken, the marches and counter-marches of politics, the very halts of the Revolution, all these things which arrest the gaze of the crowd, are *only the tops of cards*, incidental circumstances and, as I have already told you, the twists and turns of the drama. What is it in its intimate nature and who is the real one, the principal actor? You have read the answer to this twofold question in the Pope's encyclical and his vicar's edict. To make the terrible but profound truth of this response shine before everyone's eyes, I would like to address the following questions to you and to all serious minds:

- How is it that the Catholic Church, queen and mother of old Europe, has for centuries been obliged to turn in on itself, and to make one concession after another in the face of the modern *spirit*, which makes none for her?
- How is it that she saw all the roots which, through ownership, attached her to the soil of a land cultivated with her hands, watered with her blood, successively uprooted from north to south?

- How is it that after eighteen hundred years of possession and affirmation, Christianity today finds itself not in the presence of schism and heresy, but in front of the universal denier, whom it had to fight when entering the world?
- How is it that the nations of Europe, baptized twelve centuries ago, have reached the point of no longer being able to tolerate the Church, their mother, possessing among them an independent inch of land?
- How is it that the royal authority of their Redeemer, represented by his Vicar, this authority surrounded by the respect of so many generations, consecrated by so many secular benefits, is today so misunderstood that it can be played in theaters with impunity; so unpopular that it no longer has any support in the conscience of the great majority, and that, despite his angelic indulgence, Pius IX is threatened with becoming the Louis XVI of the Papacy?
- How is it that he can be cited as a criminal at the bar of Europe, and that he can be given a full trial, to establish that he must divest himself of his temporal sovereignty, on pain of being declared responsible for all the disorders committed and all the blood spilled in a violent expropriation?
- How is it that, instead of raising a unanimous cry of doom against the despoilers, the immense Praetorium is divided into two parties, the most influential of which applauds frantically the scandal of the trial and the condemnation of innocence?
- Where does this fierce hatred of sons against their father come from? What is this monstrous phenomenon, unknown in the annals of crime?

Since it is obvious that the only reason for attacking the Church's temporal power is to weaken, hinder and, if possible, annihilate its spiritual power, how

has the Europe of Charlemagne and Saint Louis, the Europe of the Crusades, so devoted a daughter of the Church, come to repeat the death cry of the deicide people: **We no longer want her to reign over us!** A priest-king is an insult to civilized nations; an old remnant of a bygone age, it must disappear: its presence is a stain on the Age of Enlightenment?

These, my dear friend, are the serious questions before us. What is the answer? Those who doubt nothing, because they doubt nothing, will improvise a thousand answers for you. For you, the Holy Father's word will be the appropriate expression of the truth. In fact, the serious observer, standing on the edge of the sea, does not explain the wave that breaks at his feet by the wave that immediately follows it. To find the cause of the storm, he goes back to the **very center of the movement.**

Now, at the head of the history of the world and the theology of all peoples, is written a truth that accounts for everything, and without which nothing could be accounted for. Whatever corner of the globe it inhabits, or whatever cult it professes, humanity repeats from generation to generation: **"Since original sin, two opposing spirits have hovered over the world: on the one hand, the spirit of good, the Holy Spirit; on the other, the spirit of evil, Satan, the rebellious angel. Whatever he does, man lives under the empire of one or the other. If he withdraws from the action of the spirit of good, he falls, in analogous proportion, under the action of the spirit of evil, and vice versa. What is true of man, is true of peoples, true of humanity."**

In vain, the language of the world, ignorant and light-hearted, disguises this unchanging background of things under insignificant or lying words. **That, in principle, is the only philosophy of history, and the root cause of evil.**

Having said that, what has been the general trend in Europe's relationship with Christianity over the last few centuries? How do you judge the current insurrection against the Papacy, which is the final stage? Is it the reign of the Holy Spirit, which is spreading more and more over the world? Or is it the reign of Satan, which is growing by leaps and bounds?

IT'S ONE OR THE OTHER: THERE IS NO MIDDLE

If you hesitate, compare time to time, fruit to fruit. To form your conviction, let us stop, my dear friend, at a single example. From those granite blocks we call Barbarians, who were our forefathers, the world has seen Abraham's children emerge. The name of the time, witness to a heavenly miracle, is an insult today, I know. I also know everything that can be said against the Middle Ages. It is no less true that the Spirit that animated it produced four masterpieces, the only four advances worthy of the name that mankind has ever achieved.

IT CONSTITUTED RELIGION. There was a day when the whole of Europe sang the same symbol. From east to west, from north to south, not a discordant voice disturbed this vast concert. **Unity of faith: the magnificent triumph of truth over error.**

IT CONSTITUTED THE CHURCH. There was a day when the guardian of the society of faith became the most beloved and respected power, the largest landowner in Europe, and the clergy the first body of the State. **Church authority: a magnificent triumph of intelligence over force.**

IT CONSTITUTED SOCIETY. There was a day when not a single anti-Christian, and therefore anti-social, law stained the codes of Europe. To maintain harmony on earth, as the sun maintains it in the firmament, the King of kings, represented by his Vicar, hovered above all kings. The decision of a father, the infallible organ of the eternal law of justice, was the last reason for right and the end of conflict. **The word in place of the sword: freedom's magnificent triumph over despotism.**

IT CREATED THE FAMILY. There was a day when, throughout Europe, the family rested on the four foundations that make up its strength, its happiness and its glory: unity, indissolubility, sanctity, perpetuity through respect for paternal authority, during life and after death. **The spirit in place of the flesh:** **the magnificent triumph of the new man over the old man**; radical healing of polygamy, divorce and selfishness, the hideous scourges of the pagan family.

Such is the ascending scale traversed by the era of which I speak.

Take a look, my dear friend, at the history of modern Europe. What has become of these four mighty columns of our ancestors' religious and social edifice?

Where is the unity of faith today?

Where is the property and royal power of the Church?

Where is Christian public law?

Where is the Christian constitution of the family?²³

Under what influence have these masterpieces been disfigured or destroyed? These columns shaken or broken? Progress replaced by retrograde steps, setting us back twenty centuries? The Seine will pass over the towers of Notre-Dame preventing common sense from responding: No, these are not the works of the spirit of God. But if all these ruins were not made under the

²³ Par arrêt du 16 janvier 1860, la Cour de Cassation a déclaré que le divorce est dans le *droit des gens*? (Lesquels?) By judgment of January 16, 1860, the Court of Cassation declared that divorce is within *human rights*? (Which ones?)

influence of the Spirit of good, then they were made under the influence of the Spirit of evil. There's no way out of it.

Thus, for those who do not seek to pay with words or to pay for others, the lamentable destructions that I have just pointed out, and those no less lamentable that are being prepared, in a word, what we see is the work of the ancient prince of this world, driven out by the Redeemer, but returned to the heart of the Christian nations, with an authority little different from that which he exercised before his defeat at Calvary.

From victory to victory he marches today, escorted by Europe, his auxiliary or his accomplice, to the conquest of Rome, his ancient capital. Rebuilding the Rome of the Popes, the Rome of the Caesars, in order to renew the world to the pagan social order, regarded as the time of the splendor and prosperity of Italy: that is, as we have heard, what Pius IX and his vicar say loudly, without hesitation and without phrase, about the Revolution and its projects.

These, my dear friend, and I have my reasons for repeating it, are the exact definition of the situation and the last word of the drama which keeps us in suspense. Neither the childish interpretations of worldly wisdom nor the foolish denials of bias will succeed in changing the word, any more than the poor expedients of diplomacy can destroy the fact.

All yours.

D A N G E R S

LETTER VI

Dear Friend,

In outlining the situation, I spoke of the **sufferings of Catholics**. Since Calvary, do you know of any more legitimate and poignant? Look to the East: what do you see? In Cochinchina, five hundred thousand Catholics, hunted down for three years like wild beasts, given over to the horrors of hunger, prisons and torture. In Syria, a veritable butchery of Christians: a massacre which, by the number of victims, the refinements of cruelty, the duration and extent of the extermination, stands out from all the others.

Look to the West: what a sight! The reign of the demon spreading with unheard-of rapidity; a whole world calling itself Christian, up in arms against God and Christ, spewing insults and blasphemy in every tone and language, **MOCKING THEIR AUTHORITY, THEIR PROMISES AND THEIR THREATS**. A whole family of baptized peoples, slandering the best of mothers, lavishing contempt on her, stripping her, driving her from her last refuge, and waging war against her more fiercely than they do against the Turk, slaughterer of their brothers.

The most sacred principles of public law, trampled underfoot with hitherto unparalleled cynicism; human liberty, the price of divine blood, betrayed and crucified; property, the family, shaken to their foundations; the hypocrisy of Judas, the cowardice of Pilate, felony under every name; then theft, banditry, humanism, set up as rights and even duties; finally and above all the ingratitude and insensitivity of the guilty : that's one corner of the picture.

See, on the other hand, this Old Man, much less venerable by his white hair than by his supreme dignity and his angelic gentleness, soaked in humiliations; this King, the most legitimate of all kings, who spent doing good, accused of

being an evildoer; this holy Pontiff who never stopped loving, praying and blessing, reserved for captivity or death; this Representative of the freedom of the world, condemned as a tyrant; this Father who cries and who asks in vain from those who call themselves his sons, if not consolations equal to his sorrows, at least the alms of some effective help in his extreme distress. No powerful voice responds to his, and he is reduced to saying: "I have nourished and raised children, and they have despised me."

So, Calvary in the East, Calvary in the West, and on both, our Mother Church, crowned with thorns and crucified: in the East, by infidels, in the West by her own children: Nothing is missing from the Golgotha scene. This, my dear friend, is the subject of our tears and the tears of all Catholics.

After the pains come the dangers. When the supreme attack on Rome is consummated, the despoilers and their followers will say: It's an accomplished fact, and they'll pretend not to think about it. We Catholics will say: It has barely begun. And we'll be on our guard. **The era of perils will have come**, *instabunt tempora periculosa* (*perilous times will come*). What am I saying? my friend, we're already there. Allow me to point out to you in this letter a very formidable danger, which too many have failed to avoid: the danger of sophistry.

(translator's note: per online cambridge dictionary '**sophistry**' : **the clever use of arguments that seem true but are really false, in order to deceive people**)

Satan is a liar by nature, *mendax*; he is the father of lies, *pater mendacii*. The first revolution was made by a lie, *eritis sicut dii*. Daughters of this one, all the others are made by the same process. The more serious they are, the more they lie. Now, today lies, hypocrisies, sophisms, woven with infernal art, circulate among us, more numerous than the atoms in the air. Volumes were not enough to contain them. I limit myself to pointing out two or three to you, around which an infinite number of others are grouped.

We have seen that, for the past four centuries, one of the most honest and above all constant occupations of Caesarian governments has been to despoil

the private churches. Made by the despoilers themselves, civil law has sanctioned the theft. It held, and wanted to be considered, as legitimate owners, the possessors of usurped goods.

With unprecedented audacity, the mother Church was asked to ratify the dispossession of her daughters. Threats of schism, hindrances of every kind to the exercise of its spiritual authority, nothing was omitted to extract its consent. In fear of greater evils, the Roman Church resigned itself to painful concessions, while demanding from governments a suitable indemnity for the dispossessed churches. This is the basis of all modern concordats.

What is the Revolution doing today? She turns against the mother the arguments successfully used against the daughters. For a long time the fire of rebellion has been blown in the Roman States: money, slander, sacrilegious derision, secret agents and accredited agents, open violence, everything has been done to make the temporal government of the Holy Father impossible. When the ground was mined and a spark was enough to determine the final explosion, the Pope was told: "Your position is no longer tenable. In your interest, and for the sake of public tranquility, recognize the fait accompli. Imitate Pius VI, your venerable predecessor, consent to the partial expropriation of your domains: you will lose nothing but embarrassment. As compensation, the Catholic nations, your devoted daughters, will give you a magnificent endowment.

"You cannot, most holy Father, find bad for the Church of Rome what you have found good for the other Churches. You have said to them: 'A violent act has dispossessed you of your possessions, We are deeply grieved; but against force there is no resistance.' For the good of souls, We renounce your rights; accept, in exchange, the stipulated treatment. Because you will be less wealthy, religion will not perish. "

Reduced to its simplest form, this honeyed speech is, if I may say so, an argument worthy of Mandrin. "I robbed you yesterday, so I have the right to rob you today. Yesterday you allowed yourself to be robbed, and good for you; to

resist today, apart from being perilous, would be to lack logic and lie to your precedents."

If the impertinence is odious, the sophistry is palpable. The painful concessions that the Holy See thought it could make to the detriment of the particular Churches, it cannot, at any price, make for itself. First of all, a solemn oath, sworn by every Sovereign Pontiff, opposes them. The interests of the universal Church are no less strongly opposed. This truth will soon become clear to you.

Whether the Churches of France or Spain, for example, are temporally dependent on governments; that this dependence more or less hinders their freedom of speech and action: it is a great misfortune, without doubt; but it is a local misfortune. These Churches, not being responsible for teaching all nations, neither the Catholic truth, nor the general government of the Church, will not essentially suffer from their servitude.

When it comes to the Church of Rome, the question is quite different. What becomes of the universal teaching of truth and the government of the Catholic world, if the metropolis of truth, the mistress of all the Churches, ceases to be fully independent? If it is not completely free in its words and deeds, how can its august Head fulfill the divine mission of confirming its brethren in the faith, everywhere and always? Even supposing he could do so, what would become of the authority of his teaching?

In the words of the Pope, stripped of his territorial independence, host, vassal or pensioner of any sovereign, we will always be inclined to fear the influence of the master. Malignity will seek it; the spirit of insubordination, ill will or national jealousy will know how to find it. Obedience ceases to be blind and filial: it hesitates; faith is over (done for).

With faith goes human freedom. That freedom which consists in resisting to the point of blood, rather than bending under the yoke of error and iniquity; that freedom to which the world owes all its glories, rests essentially on unshakeable faith in truth and justice. Render the authentic organ of both

suspect, and instead of obeying to the point of blood, man does not obey at all. The government of the Word has lost its authority; you have substituted it with the government of the sword.

In defending his independence, then, it is not Ancona, Bologna, Rome or any other piece of land that the Pope is defending: it is man's most glorious prerogative, the one of which he rightly shows himself to be the most jealous and proud: freedom, the freedom of all, the freedom of the world. We shall soon see that, in his heroic struggle, Pius IX defended something quite different.

Let's move on to a second sophism. "The Church, it is said, subsisted without territorial independence, and the government of the word was no less powerful. Territorial independence is therefore not necessary for the Church. "

It's mistaking fact for right; it's confusing times and circumstances, in order to confuse the issue and for the sake of one more sophism. Here's the truth: in establishing the Church, the Son of God gave it everything necessary to achieve its end. The end of the Church is the sanctification of souls through the free exercise of its spiritual authority. The material independence of the Roman Church is necessary for the exercise of the spiritual authority of the Holy Father, the supreme organ and head of the Church.

This has been declared twenty times in past centuries by the Vicars of Jesus Christ, and in modern times by Pius VI, in particular, and Pius IX. As you have just heard, common sense itself says it so clearly that there is no need to insist. The material independence of the Holy See is therefore by divine right.

No doubt the Roman Church didn't enjoy it from the outset. Would we want her to have possessed territorial independence, at the very center of an empire whose leader was Nero? But just because it wasn't currently attainable, the right was no less real, no less necessary. When she later claimed and exercised it, she didn't invent a new right, she simply proclaimed the right inherent in her constitution.

It is added that in the early centuries, when the Roman Church enjoyed no territorial independence, the government of the word was never more powerful.

I know, and the bloody annals of the martyrs are proof. So who gave the word of the Roman Pontiff its all-powerful authority? In the absence of material independence, the visible guarantee of the freedom of his teaching, Peter offered his moral independence: he gave his life.

In the middle of the amphitheater, under the ax of the executioners, under the teeth of the tigers, in the sight of an immense people, coming from all corners of the world, the Bishop of great Rome, the Father of Christians, stood courageously allowing himself to be sacrificed, guaranteed the truth of his teaching. From Nero to Diocletian, this is how the popes signed their bulls. "How," cries Pascal, "can we not believe in witnesses who allow themselves to be slaughtered?" So people believed: faith rested on martyrdom.

Could this state of affairs last forever? Was this a regular existence? Obviously not. Precisely because it was militant and had fought gloriously, the Church had to make conquests. By providing her with material independence, these conquests should, in order to authorize her word and command her faith, dispense her from martyrdom. This, my dear friend, is the deep-rooted reason for the independence the Church is being robbed of today: Satan knows what he's doing.

As this question touches on both the present and the future, I would like to add a few words. Of the sacred right to independence, the facts, in agreement with reasoning, show both its existence and its necessity. With regard to territorial independence, the life of the Church can be divided into four periods.

THE FIRST, FROM THE BEGINNING TO CONSTANTINE. At this time there is no territorial independence: and it is the era of persecutions and martyrdoms; it is Satan's empire over the world; it is, in the reign of the Church, a purely spiritual power, restricted to simple individuals.

THE SECOND, FROM CONSTANTINE TO CHARLEMAGNE. At this time, territorial independence was incomplete and poorly defined: and it was, as has been noted before²⁴, the era of tribulations and incessant vexations of the Holy See;

²⁴ Voir le théolog. Muzarelli : *Richesses du clergé*.

the era of heresies, swarming like tares in the field without sufficient defense of the father of the family; the era of the Church's struggles against Satan, who still competes with it step by step.

THE THIRD, FROM CHARLEMAGNE TO THE REBIRTH OF PAGANISM. At this time, complete and authentic territorial independence: and it is the social reign of the Church, replacing that of Satan; it is the visible royalty of Jesus Christ recognized everywhere; it is the defeat of all heresies, none of which is powerful enough to take root in the soil of the West.

THE FOURTH, FROM THE REVIVAL OF PAGANISM TO US. From this time on, the territorial independence of the Church was attacked again, and, as we have seen, long before Luther. This independence becomes more and more incomplete. Immediately the era of tribulations, schisms and heresies begins again. The social rule of the Church is visibly weakening, and that of evil is growing in similar proportions.

Finally, even today, the Church is being returned to its state of complete dependence and purely spiritual power, reigning, as in the days of the catacombs, over mere individuals. Caesar and the Pope are about to come face to face. God forbid that the era of persecution and martyrdom should begin again tomorrow!

As you can see, dear friend, the whole of history shows the Church's spiritual authority increasing or diminishing in the same proportions as its material independence. In their high significance, the facts I have just indicated are corroborated by another no less constant. It is claimed that territorial independence is not necessary for the Church; that the wealth of the clergy is rather an evil than a good; that poverty is much more suited to the spouse of a poor God, and gives her, today especially, a more universal and respected moral authority.

If this is so, why is it that all the princes, all the peoples, all the eras that have loved the Church the most, that have surrounded it with the most filial respect, have hastened to increase its material independence, paying it tribute

with rich properties, sometimes entire cities and provinces? Their love has been blind. If it had been clairvoyant, it would have abstained; if it had been clairvoyant, it would have reduced the Church to dependence and beggary. On the contrary, the heretical and schismatic princes, the impious and revolutionary governments that have robbed the Church and prevent it from acquiring, have alone understood the true interests of religion.

In this respect, Constantine, Charlemagne and their imitators were fools and very bad Christians; Henry VIII and his ilk, men of good sense and truly evangelical Christians. Garibaldi and Victor-Emmanuel, who today give the Pope no resting place for his head, are the world's first two Catholics!

And there are strong heads who allow themselves to be taken in by such a sophism, who defend it, who propagate it and who make it accepted! There remains another which I reserve examination for first correspondence.

All yours.

LETTER VII

Dear friend,

The sophisms which we have dealt with aim to establish in principle that material independence is not necessary for the Church, and that poverty suits it better than wealth. From the particular we move on to the general. It is claimed to prove that the current Pope must abandon the provinces invaded by the Revolution. For this, we cite the example of Pius VI.

The choice was not a happy one. It was precisely because he had before him the experience of his venerable predecessor that Pius IX was to give nothing away. After signing the Treaty of Tolentino, did Pius VI keep the rest of his States? Did the cession he thought he could make to brute force prevent him from being driven out of Rome and Italy a few months later, from being deprived of his freedom and from dying in prison? You must agree that knowing **that** outcome is very encouraging for Pius IX.

Moreover, circumstances are no longer the same. At the time of Pius VI, the Revolution had not yet clearly said its last word. It was possible to misunderstand its plans and believe that it would be content with a partial usurpation. Today, such an illusion is no longer possible. **The Revolution doesn't just want part of St. Peter's estate, it wants all of it.**

Furthermore, the eminent Cardinal Antonelli rightly points out that Pius VI was robbed by violence, and that Pius IX is being asked to abdicate. However, no pope has ever abdicated: he cannot, nor must. "If therefore," he adds, "we consider the difference in the cases, we will easily see that the same motive which induced Pius VI to yield, obliges Pius IX to an absolute refusal.

"Pius VI, in circumstances completely different from the present, was faced with **insurmountable violence and material force**. Pius IX, on the other hand, was faced with a principle that people wanted to make prevail. But material

force is only a fact. By its very nature, it is limited and only makes itself felt within the circle of its action, which it cannot or will not go beyond. The same cannot be said of **principles**. By their very nature, they are universal and inexhaustibly fruitful. They do not stop at the point to which we wish to restrict their action, but tend towards a general application.

Thus Pius VI, by yielding to material force, could reasonably hope to save the rest of his States, whereas Pius IX, **yielding to a supposed principle, would virtually abdicate the sovereignty of all his States, and authorize a spoliation against every principle of justice and reason.** By this we can see that the example of Pius VI leads rather to a conclusion quite opposite to the one we have in view."²⁵

You can now appreciate this new sophism (fallacy) about which so much noise has been made; but of this and all others of the same kind, more complete justice must be done in favor of Catholics.

Now, regardless of all the reasons given, the very interest of society, threatened by pagan communism, made it Pius IX's particular duty not to sanction anything dared against his temporal domain.

IN DEFENDING HIS RIGHT, THE POPE DEFENDS ALL RIGHTS.

This is the point on which the question must be maintained. In passing, to the shame of certain Catholics, higher or lower on the social ladder, the Protestants of Mecklenburg, in their address to Pius IX, have very well understood and nobly expressed this point.

We have already seen that in defending his independence, the Holy Father defends freedom. It remains to show that he is defending authority, property, all goods, all rights, society itself, and this against barbarism. I have no other word

²⁵ Dispatch of February 29, 1860, in response to the circular from Mr. Thouvenel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of France.

for what threatens us. If the one I use is too strong, you'll soften it; but before you start looking for a synonym, listen to me.

You must admit, dear friend, that we are witnessing a strange spectacle. What is happening before our very eyes? Two opposing forces are at war: the Revolution and Catholicism. What does the Revolution want? To inaugurate its right. And what right is that? It is the right of man reigning without dependence on, or control by, the authority of God; in other words, it is the right of force. What is the inauguration of the right of force? It is the triumph of barbarism; for the same law governs savages and wolves.

Now look where we are. Under heaven, only one man is defending true law, the law of justice, against revolutionary law. To safeguard it, he devotes himself to outrage, persecution, poverty, perhaps martyrdom. His cause is the cause of all, the cause of civilization. Doesn't it seem that the whole of Europe should rally around him and support him heroically with the triple power of its prayers, its gold and its blood?

Well, not only are we abandoning him, but far from acknowledging his invincible energy, you hear millions of men of every country, state and rank blaming his conduct, taunting him with obstinacy, blindness and worldly ambition. This is the way to reduce the highest social question to the petty proportions of a vile interest. May God forgive them, for they know not what they say!

They don't know that in defending Christian law against revolutionary law, the heroic Pius IX is defending order against disorder, authority against anarchy, property against socialism, civilization against barbarism; the nobleman's castle, the banker's safe, the merchant's store, the worker's savings bank, the plowman's field, as well as the throne of kings, even that of Victor-Emmanuel. **All rights are upheld.** The palace and the thatched cottage rest on the same foundation. The fire has no preference: with the same flight it consumes the rich districts and the suburbs.

Let it be recognized in principle, that if one can, under the pretext of national convenience or utility, expropriate, in defiance of all rights and all existing treaties, any prince, even if he is a pope: before long not one throne will not remain standing. Even more so, no owner is safe. The principle that you invoke today against the Sovereign Pontiff, and that you claim to make him sanction, tomorrow this pitiless logic of democracy will turn against you: what will you have to say?

That's what people don't want to understand: I should say what **we can no longer understand**. Indeed, such is the impotence of logic and the weakening of common sense, even among a large number of honest people, that these elementary ideas pass twenty cubits above their heads. **Among all the symptoms of the evil to which Europe is prey, I know of none more alarming than this weakness or perversity of the intelligences.**

When you see a man groping in the middle of the day, mistaking cars for doors, calling white what is black, you say that man is struck by vertigo or dementia. When I see a world giving me the same spectacle, how can I not say that it is on the borders of barbarism? What is madness for the individual is barbarism for peoples.

Be that as it may, for those who retain the ability to link two ideas, **the fall of St. Peter's temporal throne is, in the social order, the uncertainty of all rights, the shaking of all thrones, and the signal for a general meltdown.** In the religious order, **for the Church, it means entering the most difficult phase of its existence, perhaps the return to the catacombs.** For the nations that condemn their mother to this harsh ordeal, it's the beginning of an unknown future, one that even the most steadfast eyes dare not contemplate.

Whatever the authors and approvers of the spoliation may say, this fact, which is being reduced to petty proportions, is fraught with immense events that will shake Europe to its foundations. We'll come back to this later. In the

meantime, I must speak to you of more immediate dangers. The practical purpose of my letters demands it: **these new dangers are schism and persecution.**

All yours.

LETTER VIII

Dear Friend,

Four facts beget one another and are linked by an indissoluble bond of kinship. Despotism, despoilment of the Church, schism and persecution: these are what we see in every epoch of history. These facts are in the present situation. I'm not saying they'll come out of it, please note; I'm just saying they're there. And facts are brothers only because ideas are sisters. Once established, the first thing that makes despotism, royal or popular, is to despoil the Church, its incorruptible rival. Impoverish it, in order to weaken it; weaken it, in order to keep it under control: nothing could be more logical. If the spoliation reaches the very head of the Church and strips it of its territorial independence: what will happen?

In the most favorable supposition, the word of the common Father becomes suspect. Right or wrong, this suspicion is the seed of schism. I won't insist. Please refer to what we have said about human freedom, which is also guaranteed by pontifical independence. If you want reasoning, read Napoleon 1st oft-quoted reflections.

One day the warrior was a theologian. He said: "The institution that maintains the Pope as guardian of Catholic unity is an admirable one. This leader is criticized for being a foreign sovereign and we must thank heaven for that. Can you imagine such an authority in the same country, alongside the government of the State? United with the government, this authority would become the despotism of the sultans; separated, hostile perhaps, it would produce an awful, intolerable rivalry. The Pope is out of Paris, and that's fine. He is not in Madrid or Vienna, which is why we support his spiritual authority. In Venne and Madrid, we are justified in saying the same. We are therefore happy that the Pope resides away from home, and that by residing away from home, he does not reside with his rivals. I don't support these things out of devout

stubbornness, but out of reason.“ (Reported by M. Thiers in the *History of the Consulate*.)

How many misfortunes Napoleon would have spared himself, had he taken his own words as a rule of conduct! But no; it is in the nature of despotism to want more than it should. Here lies the second supposition, more certain than the first, and much more serious.

The Pope, deprived of his independence, finds himself in conflict with the prince of whom he is the guest or vassal. Without being prevaricant, he cannot grant what is asked of him: what will happen? To find the answer, we don't have to go far back in history.

Our century has seen a Pope of saintly memory, a lamb of gentleness, but fortunately a lion of firmness. Stripped of his temporal domain, this Pope became the prisoner of the despoiler. To bend him to his unjust whims, there is no pressure that Caesar does not exert on the Pontiff. Seduced, threatened and mistreated, the Vicar of Jesus Christ wants to protest. His mouth is closed. He wants to continue teaching and governing the Church. His words cannot reach the ears of the Catholic world. Abused, he was dragged from prison to prison; and, in an event without precedent in the annals of ancient persecutions, for more than five years the government of the Church was made completely impossible for him.²⁶

If the voice of truth was necessarily mute, the voice of error was not. Around the pontifical prison, attempts at schism were pursued with an ardor and brilliance that brought the Church of France to the brink of ruin. It was time for Providence to intervene. It did so, as in all similar cases, in a direct and sovereign manner. He who laughs at the counsels of men and commands the elements, is the same One who said, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will

²⁶ Close custody . . . He was detained for five years and more, with all the roads completely blocked, so that he could not govern the Church of God, without any example similar to that in the ancient annals. *Brev.-Rom. 24 maii*.

build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He remembered his word: you know the rest.

I hear you, my dear friend; you're assuming, you say, that schism is in the spirit of the situation? even in this hypothesis, do you think it's possible? You already know my answer to the first question. The situation is the growing reign of the Revolution. And the Revolution wants better than schism. Pius IX himself said it: he wants the complete ruin of the Catholic religion, (*catholicam religionem funditùs evertere*). If it ever becomes the absolute mistress of its actions, we'll see what she's really thinking.

As for the governments which are in collusion with it and which claim to say to it, as God himself said to the Ocean: You will come this far, and forbid you to go further; Let us not, I wish, attribute to them any schismatic intention.²⁷ But are their dispositions, however good they may be today, enough to reassure us? Are men always masters of themselves, are they always masters of themselves and of events? Are we ignoring the influence of opinions, the so-called necessities of circumstances, so often invoked in times of revolution?

Let's not forget modern history. When the French Revolution began, did many of its protagonists have a preconceived intention to bring about the schism of the Civil Constitution? Nevertheless, the event did take place. At the bottom of the schismatic deed, you can read the signatures of the same men who had once sworn inviolable respect for the Catholic religion.

Your second question remains: is schism possible today? To put Catholics on their guard, I could simply recall the Apostle's words: "There must be heresies," let alone schisms. This is one of the thousand trials reserved for the Church. Does our age enjoy any immunity in this respect? Does it not bear in

²⁷ It must have come as no surprise that two days ago the government published a brochure entitled: ***Emperor and Pope***. This brochure is a direct call for schism. Here's a summary: "Suppression of Roman influence, appointment of a Patriarch, ecumenical council of the French episcopate, universal suffrage applied to the clergy, the State as director of religious administration, suppression of concordats, civil constitution of the clergy". Is the rendering clear enough?

its bosom the elements of this moral disease? **So what does it take to make a schism? Two things: negation AND affirmation. A negation of faith and obedience to the Church, and an affirmation of ambition to satisfy or well-being to preserve.**

Is negation missing these days? **Look around you, and judge the tree by its fruit. Where is the faith of the many? This square faith that nothing overturns, this faith all in one piece, which is or which is not, and for which any reprobate or suspicious concession is an apostasy? Isn't one of the characteristics of our time impatience with the yoke of religious authority? Is it not an unfortunately all too certain fact that most minds seek to escape by any tangent from the orbit of simple and complete faith? Can indifference even to dogmatic truth be carried further?**

As an authentic expression of these alarming dispositions, don't we have the equality before the **law of yes and no in matters of belief**: an unheard-of phenomenon in the Christian world, and one that pagan Rome experienced only in the days of its decadence? Do we not still have the quiet obstinacy of so many men of every condition and dignity who, even today, respond with contempt and sarcasm to the wrath of excommunication with which the Church has struck them?

Is this the affirmation? **Isn't another distinguishing feature of the present age the fever for pleasure? FOR TOO LARGE A PORTION OF SOCIETY, IS LIFE ANYTHING OTHER THAN A RACE FOR GOLD, DIGNITIES AND PLEASURES?** Whether the increase or simply the conservation of these goods, of which so many men have made their gods, depends on disobedience to the Church, is it really true that the faith of the martyrs has suddenly awakened in people's hearts, to the point of making everyone prefer poverty to fortune, humiliation to honors? What answer does the history of Germany, of England, of France itself and of all countries, **where schism has become the price of dignity and wealth?** The two elements of schism are therefore not lacking.

Now, schism, in principle, is, at a given moment, persecution in practice: another danger of the situation. No more than anywhere else, we are not accusing anyone's intentions here, and our aim is in no way to throw fanciful worries into souls. We only note one fact: the connection that exists between schism and persecution.

However great the number of defectors and worshippers of the fait accompli in the various eras of schism, the Church and its rights have always retained, and always will retain, intrepid defenders. Schismatic power has everywhere taken it upon itself to transform them into confessors of the faith and martyrs. This power wants to be obeyed by all, and at all costs. For them (the martyr), it's always a question of self-esteem and tranquillity, often a matter of life and death. Under these conditions, inherent to its nature, it is inevitably driven to break down all resistance. So we cut off the head without scruple, because we cut them off on principle.

The French Revolution is further proof of this. After solemnly declaring the liberty, equality and fraternity of all citizens, respect for religion and the inviolability of the king, it fell into schism. The next day, with no less solemnity, it decreed the proscription of priests and Catholics, the massacres of the Vendée, the reign of terror and the murder of Louis XVI.

Under the First Empire, didn't we see persecution marching in a parallel line, with the schismatic attempts of 1811? Remember Germany and England in the sixteenth century. Read what the very clement Emperor of Russia is doing today with regard to his Catholic subjects. Without going so far, see how the Italian revolution, which is still in its infancy, treats the faithful clergy in usurped countries. How many religious were hunted and robbed! How many bishops were fugitives, exiled or imprisoned!

But what's the point in proving the obvious? In all times and in all countries, despotism, despoilment of the Church, schism and persecution are four correlative facts. With the proscription of Christian law, the age of Caesars begins anew: and the age of Caesars is inevitably the age of martyrs. The

history of the past offers no exception to this law. Will the history of the present be happier? The future will tell.

All yours.

LETTER IX

Dear Friend,

The dangers we have just pointed out are in the nature of the present situation, i.e. in the increasingly complete triumph of the Revolution. **Barring a miracle, they will, one day or another, be terrible realities.** These realities will be wherever Revolution reigns, and in the same proportion as the power of its reign. But the prospect of schism and persecution frightens Catholics most of all. The others, and that's the vast majority, are relatively unaffected. Let them not be too quick to reassure themselves. There are subjects of fear that are common to all. I'm talking about public calamities, the consequences of the situation.

Remember this: whatever the Revolution has not done, it hates; whatever it hates, it destroys. Give it absolute power today, and, despite its protests, it will be tomorrow what it was yesterday, what it will always be: the all-out war against religion, society, the family, property. The god of evil, it does not change, it cannot change. Don't let it say it's been slandered: its actions betray itself. Remember 1793 and 1848. See what it was like in Italy in 1860.

With unparalleled audacity, it trampled underfoot the double charter of the divided world: religion and the law of nations. It tore it up, bearing its bloody shreds at the end of its bayonets. On its flags, it inscribes the right to revolt against all authority, except its own; the right to oppress, expel and imprison anyone who displeases it; the right to dispossess all sovereigns, by dispossessing the most legitimate sovereign of all: and it practices this right.

What is this, if not communism on a large scale, the prelude to communism in small? If, against all divine and human justice, kings are allowed to annex kingdoms, why should private individuals be forbidden to annex their neighbor's wallet, house or field?

What is most alarming is the attitude of nations in the face of such attacks. Europe is undermined, dismantled by barbarians. Among the kings, some applaud; the others remain with weapons in their arms. **In vain the infallible oracle of truth, the Supreme Pontiff, tires of shouting that the Revolution wants all the thrones, that society is heading towards communism, that is to say, to the last limit of disorder and misfortune.**²⁸ The deaf do not hear, the blind do not see: official Europe is irritated or smiles. *Honest people* repeat: The triumph of the Revolution is impossible.

This is how guilty people and vulgar minds have always reasoned on the eve of great catastrophes. "The world has never been more enlightened, public fortune more prosperous, the army braver, the senate more loyal, the Emperor more powerful than today:" thus reasoned the Romans of the upper and lower empire; the former, a few years before the invasion of the Barbarians; the latter at the very sight of Mohammed's fleets. To cut a long story short, this is how the sleepers reasoned at the time of our Estates General. They didn't see, or they didn't want to see, that 1793 was inside 1789, like the chicken inside the egg, and that all it took was a blow from the beak to hatch it.

As for me, dear friend, I confess that this tranquility is far from reassuring. It has never reassured the most far-sighted minds. You have just heard the Holy Father. Listen to a few other observers. The spoliation of the temporal domain is the final blow to the last root which, through ownership, binds the Church to the soil of Europe. "Now," as M. de Bonald said thirty years ago, "public religion in Europe is finished if it has no property; Europe is finished if it has no public religion."²⁹

²⁸ Pronum est intelligere, quantum unicuique gubernio discrimen in dies comparetur, et quanta in universam civilem societatem redundet perniciēs, cum ita fatali communismo aditus aperiatur. (Allocution, 28 Septembre 1860.) It is easy to understand how much a crisis is being faced by each government day by day, and how much destruction will fall upon the whole of civil society, when the path to fatal Communism is thus opened.

²⁹ *Théor. du pouv.*, t. III, p. 106.

In 1849, Donoso Cortès wrote to me: "I owe you a million thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy of the work in which you so resolutely and deeply probed the wounds of this dying society.³⁰ For me, reading it was extremely sad and delightful at the same time. Extremely sad, through the revelation of great and formidable catastrophes; delightful, through the sincere manifestation of the truth.

"My ideas and yours are pretty much identical in every way. God made flesh for decay and a knife for rotting flesh. **We are touching with our hands the greatest catastrophe in history.** For the moment, the clearest thing I can see is the barbarity of Europe and its depopulation before it. The land through which philosophical civilization has passed will be cursed. It will be the land of corruption and blood. Then will come ... what must come."

From another point of view, Emperor Napoleon Ist came to the same conclusion. More than forty years ago, he said: "In fifty years' time, Europe will be republican or Cossack." He would have said socialist if the word had existed.

Thus, invasion by barbarians from within or invasion by barbarians from without, perhaps both; locusts for Egypt; half-naked hordes for the Romans; weakness to humiliate strength; savage barbarism to punish learned barbarism: a providential equation between crime and punishment. Who can answer, on seeing what is happening, that the inductions of logic, the analogies of history and the presentiments of genius are but dreams?

In the eyes of common sense, one thing is certain: the throne of St. Peter, that is to say, the full material independence of the Pope, is Europe's only barrier against despotism and barbarism. Once this throne is overthrown, everything is to be feared, for everything becomes possible.

³⁰ *Où allons-nous? Coup d'œil sur les tendances de l'époque actuelle.*

Add, my dear friend, that **for the Catholic, THE REVOLUTION is not a fact, like any other fact: IT IS A PUNISHMENT**. Our reasons for fear lie less in what we see, than in what we believe. Like a magnet attracts iron, crime attracts punishment. Between crime and punishment there is the same proportion as between cause and effect. **ONLY REPENTANCE CAN SAVE THE GUILTY**. These axioms of the moral world are more certain to us than the axioms of geometry.

Now cast your eyes over a map of Europe. See if you can find a baptized nation that, for four centuries, has not been guilty of schism, heresy, spoliation, atrocious persecutions, indifference and blasphemies without example or name in the history of previous ages. *Rob the Church, shackle the Church, blast the Church*: don't these three words sum up, in general terms, the life of these well-born daughters in relation to their mother? **In principle or in fact, they are all guilty of permanent insurrection against Christianity**. Are they repentant? Question their actions; listen to what is being said; see what is happening.

In the presence of the supreme humiliation inflicted on the Sovereign Pontiff today, what is their conduct? what is their language? The latter is reflected in the former. All of them confidently say: "It matters little whether the Pope's affairs are settled or not. It's a purely temporal question, with no connection whatsoever with the religious order, and even less with the social order. Let the ultramontanes try to give it proportions and a character it doesn't have: nobody will take it seriously. Based on the immortal principles of 1789, the foundations of modern society and public prosperity are solid enough to have nothing to fear from this outdated conflict between the temporal and the spiritual. "

Then, **throwing a superb disdain on the past and an insulting challenge to heaven**, they add: "In the Middle Ages people were made to believe that the Pope should be king; that the people needed Christianity and the Church; that the more they were subjugated, the more the societies flourished and we saw our good forefathers, trembling at the voice of the priests, not daring to be free

without their permission or, if they dared, condemned to public expiations; times of ignorance are no more."

"As much as it has been in us, we have emancipated ourselves from the tutelage of Christianity. We have set ourselves up outside its laws and in opposition to the Church: we are far from repentant. What harm has come to us? Since we have banished from our councils the One called King of Kings, and since we have made a mockery of the Church and its thunderbolts, we have progressed from strength to strength. We have never been more enlightened, freer, richer, stronger or more prosperous. What good is the Pope? What good is the Church? What good is Christianity? Our civilization, the most brilliant that ever was, is a solemn denial of the teachings of the past."

Is that the language of a penitent? However, **iniquity cannot escape supreme justice**. Patient because he is eternal, God can wait for the individual until the threshold of eternity. **BUT THERE IS NO ETERNITY FOR NATIONS.**

Reward or punishment, it is here on earth that they receive their wages. Balthazar's feast, the social triumph of pride and sensualism cannot last forever. If it were otherwise, man would be stronger than God. Evil would have triumphed, and Satan would never have achieved a prestige so capable of seducing the elect themselves.

So it's true: an enormous mass of debts, contracted against divine justice, threatens Europe with a terrible deadline. The only way to escape the catastrophe would be to come to an agreement with the creditor and humbly ask him for delays and thanks. In all probability, this will not happen. Far from returning to themselves, the anti-Catholic section of society, the most numerous and influential, will continue its sterile agitation, decorated with the name of politics and polemics. As in the past, it will indulge in its speculations, its pleasures, its life of movement and noise. Intoxicated by the present and unconcerned about the future, it will descend into the abyss to the sound of violins.

At least, that part of society which, with faith, retains an understanding of the evil and the remedy, will raise its hands to heaven and, with the double voice of prayer and almsgiving, solicit mercy and wisdom from on high. Will it save Europe?

Sixteen hundred years ago, the first Christians were faced with a world that wasn't yet Christian; that didn't want to become Christian; that didn't want us to be Christian; that pursued those who were Christian with insults and anger. Spread throughout the empire, our fathers prayed night and day for the conversion of this obstinate and persecuting world. "We invoke," they said, "for the salvation of the emperors, the eternal, living and true God. We ask for them a long life, a peaceful reign, an unalterable peace, a faithful senate; we delay with all the power of our wishes the fall of the empire. "³¹

Never have prayers been more fervent and selfless. What was the result? Roman society fell back on its path of hatred and contempt. There was no peaceful reign, no unalterable peace, no faithful senate. It marched from revolution to revolt, until the whole empire disappeared under the blows of the barbarians.

In the nineteenth century, we, the sons of martyrs, find ourselves in the presence of a world that ceases to be Christian; that doesn't want to become Christian again; that doesn't want us to be Christian; that pursues those who are Christian with sarcasm and hatred, including the Pope himself. Will we be happier than our ancestors? Are we more fervent? If the greatness of iniquity is measured by the price of the graces received, as the gravity of the fall is measured by the height from which one falls: is the world that has abused the blood of Calvary and eighteen centuries of blessings less guilty than the one that has been deprived of them?

All yours.

³¹ Tertull., *Apol.*, c. XXX, etc.

LETTER X

Dear Friend,

If, in the counsels of Providence, it is no more given to us to save the present world, than it was to our fathers in Rome and Jerusalem to save the Jews and Romans from the punishment so justly deserved, what will be the outcome of the present great insurrection against God? How will this war, without example in the annals of baptized peoples, end? As all the great struggles of evil against good have ended.

When God has made his paternal word resound in vain, he makes his thunderbolt speak. If the stubbornly unruly son needs correction; if the sins of the first Christians, though so Christian, were, according to the Fathers, the cause of the dreadful storms known as persecutions: how can we believe that today's Europe will return to order by a path of roses? The hardened man cries out for mercy only in the harshness of adversity. So what does it take to save a stubbornly evil society? It takes what some fear, what others hope for, what all sense: it takes trial.

What will it be? Every trial contains a double mystery: the mystery of atonement and the mystery of renewal. The fire of the crucible consumes the alloy: only gold emerges shiny and pure. The same is true of the fire of tribulation. This is how the great eras of evil, the antediluvian world and the pagan world, came to an end, through the direct and sovereign action of God's justice. Thus began, by a direct and sovereign action of God's mercy, the two great epochs of good, the patriarchal world and the Christian world.

Such is the intimate nature of the test. What will the coming one be like for us? Faith, reason and historical analogies all point to the same answer. Europe's future is a catastrophe, proportionate to the evil that is its cause and whose punishment it will be. Politics, philosophy, literature, arts, education, industry, dance, music - evil, under the name of enlightenment and civilization,

has invaded everything. It is everywhere, it is inveterate, it has resisted all remedies. By raising its sacrilegious hand against the Father of the Christian world in the face of the sun today, it has reached its final limits.

The society in which he was incarnated, which made him soul of his soul, bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh, has signed his death warrant. The catastrophe will be his tomb: his fate is written in history. Never has a society been rejuvenated, let alone a world. The catastrophe of the Flood did not rejuvenate the antediluvian world: it engulfed it. The invasion of the barbarians did not rejuvenate the Roman world: it destroyed it. **disappear**

A large ruin: that's what appears in the foreground of the painting. To see it, you don't need a telescope: the eye is enough. But what do you see behind this great ruin? Dear friend, as I said at the beginning: Friendship blinds you. You're wrong to ask me. I'm no prophet. To answer you with confidence, I'd have to be one or the other. The future is God's secret. When we try to fathom it, we inevitably enter the realm of conjecture. So don't expect prophecies or quasi-prophecies from me: mere conjecture is all I have to offer. Since you insist, I'll send you a few. Pending a more reliable light, may they illuminate a corner of the future that tomorrow will be the present; a future full of hope for some, terror for others, mystery for all!

One of two things: either the Catholic element that will survive the catastrophe throughout Europe will suffice to form a new order of things. In this case, the ordeal will be followed by a period of social peace and triumph for the Church. The eye of man will see the most consoling of miracles. The Revolution having accomplished its work of destruction, smashed, burned, slit the throats of and ransacked everything it had to; its sons themselves, having, as is their custom, devoured one another: fear will become the beginning of wisdom.

Less guilty than the others, the popular classes who, despite their disorders and their indifference, have preserved the principles of the faith, will turn to the

Church and beg it to save them. It will be the dawn of a new world. Then we will see that Providence never fumbles. We will know that it is neither to be deserted dwellings, nor to become profane places, that so many thousands of churches have been repaired, enlarged or built over the past fifty years. To all eyes will shine the reason of there being so many religious bodies, emerging as if by miracle from the bosom of a deeply corrupt society. The unknown activity of Catholic zeal and its marvelous creations will explain themselves. The bitter tears of the Church will be dried, and its long sorrows compensated by maternal joys, above all joys.

Mary will justify all the hopes of the Catholic world. ONCE AGAIN VICTORIOUS OVER THE INFERNAL SERPENT, SHE WILL TELL US WHY IT WAS RESERVED FOR OUR CENTURY, AND NOT FOR ANY OTHER, TO ADD THE LAST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL JEWEL TO ITS CROWN. In this way, the magnificent oracles of the prophets of the Old and New Testaments will be fulfilled to the full: oracles which, in the judgement of many, have hitherto been verified only incompletely. Then God alone will be great on earth. Then His Christ will reign from East to West, like Solomon, in the fullness of peace. Then there will be but one fold and one shepherd: *unum ovile et unus Pastor* (one flock and one Shepherd).

Either the Catholic element that will remain in Europe will be too weak to form a new society on its own. Or, if the West must not become a cursed and solitary land, like Judea, after the passage of Nabuchodonosor, new blood will be infused into the veins of its rare inhabitants. Europe will see what Napoleon 1st said.

Emerging from who knows not where, led by some leaders history names Attila, Genseric, Tamerlane, and who call themselves the scourge of God, the rod of kings and the terror of the world, these sons of the desert will come, like their ancestors, bow their heads under the hand of Catholicism. From this Christian element will emerge a new Europe.

However strange it may seem at first glance, this solution will not arouse the smile of any serious mind. In the East, mysterious presentiments announce it;

in the West, it has been the preoccupation of the most profound thinkers for over eighty years. Lack of space prevents me from citing the evidence.

In both of its parts, the disjunctive that I have just explained supposes that humanity is far from having fulfilled its destiny on earth. If we admit, with some, that the end of times is approaching: here is what awaits us: despite the ordeal, Europe will not convert, the triumphant Revolution will continue to extend its conquests and strengthen its reign. Social decomposition, which has become more profound than in the days of the Late Empire, will ultimately turn the modern world into a living corpse. In order to maintain the social elements in a state of aggregation, always ready to dissolve, the harshest despotism we have ever seen will weigh on the world. The war of man against God will take on more and more general proportions. This war will be led by a new anti-Christian empire, more formidable than those that preceded it.

If the hypothesis in which I reason is true, this empire has already emerged out of the cradle. Allow me, dear friend, to explain my thinking. You know that in the mind of the Church, its destiny is to always have a great enemy empire. The reason for this lies in the existence of the two cities, the City of Good and the City of Evil, both imperishable. Coming down from the Upper Room, the Church, or City of Good, found the Roman Empire, against which it had to fight for five or six centuries. Once the Roman Empire had fallen, the struggle never ended. The bloody limbs of the colossus still lay on the soil of the West, while at the extremity of the East a new anti-Christian empire was rising, no less extensive, no less cruel and more durable than that of the Caesars. Mohammed's empire persecuted the Church, and held it in check for nearly twelve hundred years. Today, it is in the convulsions of agony.

As we enter the final period of struggle, the Church, as divinely foretold, must expect, and we with her, new and more terrible battles. With the possible exception of a few short-lived truces, more apparent than real, the war will continue in every corner of the globe, for the Church will never cease to be Catholic. The war will become more and more fierce, until the appearance of

the one who, by personifying it, will be the highest expression of evil, the Antichrist par excellence.

His reign will be a time of tremendous struggles that will jeopardize the very salvation of the predestined. Like all great epochs of evil, it will end with the direct and sovereign action of God. He to whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth, will come to the rescue of the truth, and, after having slain the man of sin with the breath of his mouth, he will take with him the Church, his bride, into the abode of eternal peace. And so the world will end.

Whatever the outcome of these alternatives, one thing remains indisputable. In the midst of the perplexities of the present and the uncertainties of the future, serious duties are imposed on Catholics. I'll tell you about them in my first letter.

Yours sincerely,

DUTIES

LETTER XI

Dear Friend,

The duties of Catholics arise from the very notion of the Church. They are measured against the gravity of current circumstances, which determine their nature. What is the Church? In the strictest sense of the word, the Church is our mother, the mother of civilized nations. It is she who has begotten us to supernatural life, and as a consequence, to the light, freedom and well-being that raise Christian peoples so far above the pagans of yesteryear and the idolaters of today. ♦ Today of who boldly offer a bounty, a patent, a statue in the Pantheon of his choice, to the man who discovers a true freedom, a ray of pure light, a real advance, a completely useful institution, something truly great and truly beautiful, that does not come from the Church.

She is the one who pulled the world out of barbarism and is preventing it from falling back. For eighteen centuries, she has shed torrents of her purest blood to keep humanity from falling again. Vigils, tears, prayers, fatigue, humiliations, ceaselessly renewed struggles: she has devoted herself to everything in the interest of her sons. It's not enough for her to safeguard our temporal goods; she leads us to the possession of future goods.

Now, this mother, so many times our mother, is drowning in sorrow. Since she travelled through the valley of tears, she has never been able to say with such truth: O all you who pass along the path of life, nineteenth-century Catholics, search the history of the past, and see if there is any pain comparable to mine!

In the presence of this new Calvary, what must we be? A son sees his mother insulted; he sees her reviled, blasted, stripped, brutally driven from her home. What is his first feeling, his first duty? His heart speaks, his blood boils.

He is half, and more, in the pain of the one he cherishes more than himself. Everything he can do to defend her, he does.

Joining us in the evils of the Church, defending the Church: these, as Catholics, are our first two duties. Nature dictates them, faith commands them. But what does it mean to associate ourselves with the evils of the Church? It means seeing and feeling what we are doing to her, as if we were doing it to ourselves. Its pains must be our pains. They must occupy our thoughts, fuel our conversations, inspire our prayers. Our hearts must bleed at the wounds inflicted on her; our cheeks must turn red at the blows given; our souls must become indignant at the slanders he is subjected to; our eyes must weep at the humiliations he is subjected to and the tears he is made to shed: *Opprobria exprobrantium tibi ceciderunt super me* (*The insults of those who mocked you fell upon me*).

If it were otherwise, where would our filial piety towards the Church be? Shame on the man who can read with indifference the newspaper account of his anguish; on the man whose life is not covered by a veil of mourning; on the man who, in these moments of supreme sorrow, does not abhor festivities and worldly pleasures. Was the son who laughs and sings beside his weeping mother ever a good son?

This compassion must not be sterile. If it (our faith, our love of the Church) expires on the lips, who will take our faith seriously? We know the tree by its fruit: we only know the reality of a feeling by its deeds. Our acts of compassion for the Church must vary according to people and circumstances. The Church is poor. You are rich: give her your gold. You are poor yourselves: share your bread with her. The Church is attacked with weapons in hand. Generous blood flows in your veins: offer her your blood. The Church is indignantly slandered. You have a voice: speak out; a pen, write in her defense. The Church is abandoned, betrayed by those who claimed to be her devoted sons: her trust is in God alone. Hasten help from on high with your prayers. Let our motto be

Tertullian's words: "Today, every Catholic must be a soldier". *In his omnis homo miles.*

In this inevitable struggle, if the sword of zeal must arm the Catholic's arm, the shield of faith must cover his head. This is a new duty imposed on him. What do I mean by this, my dear friend? I mean that the Catholic must above all provide for his own safety, so as never to upset the Church by becoming himself the victim of error and sophistry. So what must he do? Know precisely what is true and what is false in the present question; consequently what he must support or fight, so as never to make suspicious concessions: a sad prelude to deplorable defections.

As the Revolution attacks society and the Church equally, it has sophisms at the service of this double iniquity. Volumes would be insufficient to contain them, let alone refute them in detail. If he wishes to preserve himself from the fiery dashes of the enemy, the Catholic must take as his immutable rule of conduct and speech these eternal maxims:

1. Those who willingly expose themselves to danger perishes there. The wrong course of action devours like cancer.

The Catholic must therefore carefully avoid conversations and readings that could distort his mind about the events of the day. Above all, he must avoid newspapers, the great corrupters of moral sense and public conscience. It used to be said that man is the son of his education, and that was true.

Today, it can be said that man is the son of his newspaper, and this is true of eighty out of every hundred.

2. In political matters, the Catholic's duty is to know and to say:

Force does not constitute right;

Success justifies nothing;

Devotion that succumbs in a just cause is glory;

Treason that triumphs is shame;

God mocks the counsels of men;
His justice has lightning returns;
To attack Peter is to attack the Immutable. Kings who do this, say the divine oracles, *se plantent des clous dans les yeux et des épées dans les reins*.
(drive nails into their eyes and swords through their backs)

3. In religious matters, every Catholic man, woman and child must know by heart and support these axioms of faith and common sense:

Stripping the Holy Father of his States is not a purely temporal and morally indifferent matter. Unjustly robbing someone, even the Pope, is theft. And theft is a religious issue.

To strip the Holy See of its ministerial independence is to lead the Church to schism and the Pope to martyrdom. For the one whose word must command the faith of the universe, there are only two places in this world: the throne or the scaffold.

To say that we have the right to strip the Pope of his possessions for reasons of public utility is to proclaim the legitimacy of the right of force, to inaugurate communism and pave the way for its triumph.

"To deny the necessity and usefulness of the Church's temporal possessions, to approve of the spoliations of which she is the victim, to blame the resistance she opposes to the advice of some and the violence of others, to show no concern for her anathemas, even to imagine that her thunderbolts do not reach in these matters, is to be very guilty before God and very worthy of the most severe punishments: because it means approving what the Church rejects, supporting doctrines it condemns, and exonerating acts it condemns."

To claim that the Pope, stripped of his temporal power, will be more respected and better obeyed is to play the part of the highway robber who says to the traveller: My friend, if I rob you, it's in your interest. When you walk barefoot, you'll be much more esteemed; and when I've *relieved* you of everything you're wearing, you'll be much freer.

But we'll give the Pope a pension! Bread for a pension, bread for ammunition; bread for ammunition, bread for submission; bread for submission, bread for tears and gravel.

To believe that concessions and reforms would have saved the Pope: that's flycatchers' food. **The Revolution said it: "Only one concession, only one reform can satisfy me: it is the complete and utter destruction of the temporal government of the Church."**³²

In defending his States, the Pope is not defending a piece of land, but the right in every respect: social right, right of sovereignty, right of ownership.

These great principles will suffice for the Catholic, to do justice like to a swarm of angry wasps, to the sophisms, as numerous as they are stupid, with which we are assailed,

We have pointed out a second danger: schism. There are two ways of avoiding it: one negative, the other positive.

The first is to repudiate, whatever his title or patrons, any opinion contrary to the spirit of the Apostolic See, to Roman doctrines, to the personal infallibility of the Vicar of Jesus Christ and to his supreme authority in the whole Church; in a word, any opinion that would tend to legitimize insubordination to the Holy Father, to any degree and on any point: or, as many are not ashamed to say: emancipation from the demands of the Court of Rome.

³² Verbatim lyrics of the *Révol. ital.* (See the already cited dispatch from Cardinal Antonelli.)

The second is to take as our invariable compass the words of Saint Ambrose: *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*: Where the Pope is, there is the Church. Raise your eyes above all heads, and even above all mitres, to fix them on the Tiara; know what the Holy Father thinks, and think like him, neither more nor less; approve what he approves; condemn what he condemns; do what he orders with childlike docility: there, my friend, is the infallible secret of staying on the path of truth and in the bosom of the Church.

Shall I speak of persecution, that other trial to which we can be reserved? Let the Catholic reread the annals of his heroic forefathers, or the contemporary history of his brothers in the Far East. They will teach him both the precautions he can take to evade his enemies, and the resignation with which he must suffer the loss of his possessions, and the sublime calm with which he must pay homage to the truth, live in prison or exile, wear the chains of the confessor and endure the torments of the martyr.

These noble examples, set by men of all ages and conditions, by weak women and timid virgins, will ignite his courage and make him say: Why can't I do what so many others have been able to do?

Astonished by so much heroism in fragile beings like himself, he will understand that martyrdom is a grace, the greatest of all, and the reward for long fidelity. If need be, to reconcile oneself seriously with God, to settle one's temporal affairs, to be scrupulously faithful in the small things, so as to deserve to be faithful in the big ones; above all, to nourish oneself often with the Eucharist, the bread of the strong, the wine of virgins, without which, in the judgment of the first Christians, martyrdom is impossible: such are the means for Catholics to always be, as Tertullian said, a race ready to die, *expeditum morti genus*.

If we are not worthy of providing the bloody career of persecution, other trials await us. Public calamities, social upheavals, anguish of more than one kind are inevitable. To make them worthwhile for the Catholic, two virtues will make up his armor: patience and charity.

Patient, he will say to himself: I need atonement. What are the pains of this life compared to the joys and rewards of the next? Casting his gaze in turn on the ancient patriarch of sorrow, he will say like Job: "The Lord had given it to me, the Lord has taken it from me; he has done what he found good, may his name be blessed;" and on the great Victim of the world, he will say with the divine Model: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice depart from my lips; yet not my will, but yours be done:"

Charitable, he will look upon creatures! not as the cause of his suffering, but as the instruments of Providence that strikes to purify or beautify. To his memory will return the evangelical precept: "Pray for those who persecute you." On his lips will be the words of the expiring Master: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. "A worthy son of his elders, he will imitate the early Christians who, far from hating their persecutors, prayed night and day for them and obeyed them in everything God did not forbid.

However, like them, he will know how to condemn evil with energy, and call the wicked by their name.

Did not the divine Master, whose tender prayer we have just read, call his persecutors cruel wolves, *lupi rapacious*, whitened sepulchres, *sepulcra dealbata*, sons of Satan, *a patre diabolo*? Didn't his precursor call the unbelieving Jews a race of vipers, *genimina viperarum*? For Tertullian, doesn't the name Nero signify all crimes? And for Lactantius, wasn't Decius an execrable animal, *execrabile animal Decius*? However harsh they may be, these qualifications can only shock those who deserve them, or those who ignore the rights of zeal, because they ignore those of truth.

By taking these necessary precautions, Catholics ensure their own safety. He fights evil in its manifestations and effects. But that's not enough; we must attack its cause: another duty I'll tell you about shortly.

All yours.

LETTER XII

double check 1st paragraph,
Dear Friend,

Less than a year ago, an article appeared whose purpose was to legitimize the despoiling of St. Peter's patrimony, or, more insultingly, to leave the vicar of Jesus Christ with nothing more than a derisory scepter. This document has no author. Through the organ of its leader it has declared that the Christian world is,, "an insignificant monument of hypocrisy, and an ignoble tissue of contradictions." So, in intrinsic value and extrinsic value, it lacks everything. Nevertheless, this eighty-page pamphlet has set Europe abuzz. More than two hundred writers, French and foreign, priests and bishops, felt it necessary to refute it.

Such a great effect for such a small cause! There's a mystery there. You may think, my dear friend, that it would have been a good idea to take note of it, and to ask how it is that a writing that is absurd in itself and impossible in other times has had such a resounding effect; how it is that the Christian sense seems so weakened in Europe, that we must have feared the seduction of many, if we were not in a hurry to prove that night is not day.

So we set to work, and to be fair, the defense went further than the attack. In the brochure we saw something other than the brochure itself. Beneath the mask of anonymity, we recognized not the author, whoever he may be, nor the personal thoughts of an isolated man, but a formidable power, against which it seemed necessary to resort to this great display of force. We were not mistaken. Taken literally, the brochure has been refuted in every language. In the eyes of Europe, it is, if you like, demolished, pulverized.

Is the same true of the occult power, whose program and test balloon it is regarded as? Have we been told its nature, its origin, the secret of its strength, the means to defeat it? Have the eloquent phrases and peremptory arguments directed against the daughter killed the mother? Have they converted her,

stopped her? Look at what's been happening in Europe for the past year. Did they even enlighten her? This slim result is more than doubtful.

What have we done? It has been proved, demonstrated to the point of evidence of an axiom of geometry, that the territorial independence of the Holy See is necessary for the free exercise of its spiritual authority;

That the head of two hundred million Catholics, spread over every part of the world, cannot be the guest, let alone the pensioner or vassal of any king;

That the temporal power of the Pope is the (oldest) most ancient, the most sacred, the most paternal, the most useful, the most legitimate of all existing powers:

That the laws of the Papal State are no more, perhaps much less, opposed to genuine improvements and liberties than the laws of certain countries that claim to be at the head of civilization;

That to violate the right of ownership and sovereignty in the person of the Holy Father is to violate it in the person of all owners and all sovereigns; to undermine all thrones; to prepare the way for democracy, by realizing on one point the anarchic dream that it promises to realize everywhere; to commit, finally, an act of insanity and felony that endangers everything, the social order even more than the religious order.

THAT, my dear friend, is what has been proved without reply, in the refutations of the brochure and other writings of the same kind. It was a duty to do so, a duty nobly fulfilled. The strong have been better armed, the weak fortified, a few defectors perhaps enlightened and rallied: all put on their guard.

But what of the power we reasoned against? Supposing it needed it, we confirmed it in its way of seeing, by demonstrating that it saw correctly; for everything we took so much trouble to prove, it knows. She's known it for a long time; she knows herself better than anyone else. It's because she knew it that she wants it, and with a will that has not stopped, and it's to be feared, will

never stop refutations, nor cries of alarm, nor the protests of justice and common sense.

Let's even suppose that it has been made hesitant, and that for a moment it suspends or slows down its march: this power will exist no less. And as long as it exists, it will be a perpetual threat to the Church, to the State, to all interests. So, I repeat, we have attacked evil in its manifestations, and we have done well. But that's not enough: we must attack its cause. What's the point of cutting off the branches of a poisoned tree, if you leave the trunk and roots?

The doctor who tells the patient: Your condition is serious, very serious; death may result; who proves this to the point of evidence, and who withdraws without indicating the nature of the illness, the cause or the remedy: this doctor, even if he is a member of all the academies, a doctor of all the universities, does not improve the patient's condition.

What have we done yet? Words of eloquent indignation have fallen from the pens of the most skillful writers, from the lips of the greatest orators. They have imprinted burning stigmata on the foreheads of the men who today overturn the social order, who, to achieve their goal, equally trample underfoot divine and human laws; and, ingratitude, hypocrisy, and cowardice are, without blushing, their auxiliaries and their accomplices.

But what? Doesn't it stop at the surface, without penetrating to the core? Isn't this mistaking the effect for the cause, and the tool for the hand that makes it work? The Revolution looks on all this with pity, and says to us: "You're misplacing your blows. In 1793, I was neither Marat, nor Robespierre, nor Babeuf; today, I am neither Victor-Emmanuel, nor Garibaldi, nor Mazzini, nor Kossuth, nor any of their open or secret accomplices. These men are my sons and my soldiers: they are not me. These men are transient manifestations; I am a permanent state. They are facts, I am a principle."

We therefore energetically condemned the men of the Revolution. Once again I will say it: We did well. But once again, my dear friend, that is not enough. What then must we do, and what is the most imperative duty of

Catholics, in the solemn circumstances in which we find ourselves? Tell me: if one day you saw your children, yesterday still glowing with health, become pale and languid, what would you do? You would certainly seek the cause of this painful change. That would be your first thought; for this would be your first duty. Once the cause of the evil is known, you run to the remedy.

The great duty of Catholics is to imitate you. Let them examine, seriously and without bias, before God and before history, how Europe, once so Christian, went off course and ended up in an abyss; what exactly is the primary and still active cause of this fatal aberration. Once we know the cause, we must arm ourselves with the unshakeable will to destroy it.

As you know, there was a time in the life of Europe when, despite original sin and its inevitable consequences, the entire social order was based on Christianity. Ideas, laws, institutions, arts, festivals, language: Christianity permeated everything with its spirit, imprinting its stamp on everything.

And that's a fact.

What is the cause of this double phenomenon? First of all, who is this new Master, this audacious Usurper who pushes Christianity with a sword in its loins, who holds society by the throat and who threatens to suffocate it, by cutting off its breath of faith? If he refuses to name himself, know him by his works. Examined closely, today's Europe, the Europe over which he reigns, is neither Lutheran nor Calvinist; she is neither Protestant, nor Jewish, nor Mohammedan: she is something more, or, if you like, something less. What is this plus or minus?

He defines himself by his great characters. In the days of the infant Church, Satan fully ruled the world. His reign was summed up in a triple apotheosis.

APOTHEOSIS OF REASON.

No more fixed beliefs; universal contradictions; equality of all religions before the law; admission of all the gods to the same Pantheon: perpetual mockery of the faith, customs, morals and traditions of the ancestors.

APOTHEOSIS OF THE FLESH.

Universal worship of the senses through the luxury of clothing, housing, food and all kinds of pleasures; by a very advanced material civilization placed at the service of all concupiscences; by literature and poetry, by theaters and by the arts, singing, glorifying reproducing in marble, in bronze, in statues and in paintings, all the infamies of gods and men, placing them with honor in the palaces, on the public places, in gardens, in private houses, on walls, ceilings, on the ground and everywhere.

APOTHEOSIS OF THE WILL.

Above, all temporal and spiritual power, concentrated in a man ruling at his whim, without control in heaven or on earth. Below, the servile adoration of the *Great Emperor (Divus Imperator)*. Everywhere hatred of Christianity, criticizer of the rights of God and the principle of freedom; hatred of the Christian, servant of God and apostle of freedom; hatred of Christianity and of the Christian, revealing itself through insult, through slander and reaching the point of carnage.

Such was, in its main characters, the reign of Satan over the pagan world, in the last days of his existence

Take again, dear friend, each of its characters. Study them carefully, and see if the history of Christian nations offers a single epoch, ours excepted, in which this triple apotheosis reappeared, with its great manifestations. What is all this? otherwise the ancient paganism, returned to the world and which lacks only the plastic form to be complete. Unless we voluntarily close our eyes to the light, there is no mistake: the Usurper that we have to fight is the same one that

nascent Christianity found, *king and god of this world (roi et dieu de ce monde)*. For us, as for our first fathers, the real struggle is not against men of flesh and blood, but against the powers of the air, against the spirits of evil, who have once again become the rulers of this world of darkness.

This being said, what is the nature of the war that we have to wage? Obviously this is an anti-pagan reaction. Any other war is blind, sterile, unfortunate. The invasion of paganism is universal and relentless. The reaction must be universal and relentless. This is the great, the only necessity of our time. Society can live without railways, without electric telegraphs, without newspapers, without rifled cannons, and even without legislative chambers, mute or speaking; but at the point where it is, it can no more do without an anti-pagan reaction than it can without bread to nourish itself or air to breathe. For her, it is literally a question of life and death.

It remains to be seen how, after a thousand years of expulsion, the ancient tyrant of mankind finds himself alive and powerful in the bosom of the Christian nations?

This question will be the subject of my first letter.

All yours.